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BY JOSEPH NASH

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THE MANSIONS OF ENGLAND IN THE OLDEN TIME

By Joseph Nash

NEW EDITION
Edited by CHARLES HOLME
With an Introduction by
C. HARRISON TOWNSEND

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PREFATORY NOTE

In the present edition of Mr. Nash's superb work, the Editor has altered the sequence of the plates in such a manner that the whole of the illustrations connected with each subject have been brought together, and the subjects follow each other in alphabetical order. In the original edition, which occupies four volumes, the plates were distributed in a haphazard fashion throughout the work. The Editor believes that the present arrangement will be found to be of more practical utility to the reader.

The title-pages of the original four volumes are placed together at the end, as they are of too interesting a character to be omitted from this edition, although they are not actually required as title-pages in the work as now arranged.

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INTRODUCTION

FOR two generations "Nash's Mansions" has held its place on the bookshelves of many an English architect. It has exerted an influence which has not, perhaps, during the last sixty years been always of the same intensity, but which has still, and on the whole, helped largely to model domestic architecture in this country during that period.

The first series of "The Mansions of England in the Olden Time" followed immediately on Joseph Nash's "Architecture of the Middle Ages," which appeared in 1838. The work was not, however, fully completed till the publication of the fourth and last volume in the year 1849. It had obtained an immediate and striking success on the appearance of the first part, but the artist, engaged as he was on other undertakings, such as the Windsor Castle Sketches, carried on under Royal command, and notwithstanding his extraordinary industry and application, was obliged to allow eleven years to elapse between the commencement and conclusion of his enterprise.

Working in early life side by side with the elder Pugin—for whose "Paris and its Environs," indeed, he made several drawings—Nash's path later diverged from that of the more celebrated son, Augustus Welby Pugin, and his predilection was for a later period of work than that to the revival of which the great Gothicist devoted his life, and he showed an affection rather for domestic than ecclesiastical architecture.

His training as a pupil of Augustus Pugin was of inestimable value to him throughout his various published works. Educated as an architect, gifted as a draughtsman, with a fine knowledge of composition and of the value of light and shade, his drawings appeal with equal effect not only to the amateur and the lover of the picturesque, but to the architect as well, who finds in them full, and yet not too full, satisfaction as to those details, such as cornices, strings, mouldings, and carving, which he has to recognise as vital elements in every design. We have in Nash's work never an architectural diagram, but always all the information necessary as to architectural detail. The extraordinary accuracy of his draghtsmanship can be checked easily in these days of photography, and he invariably comes triumphantly through the test.

Nash's earlier commissions and his drawings shown at the Exhibitions of the Society of Painters in Water Colours (of which body he was elected an Associate in 1834 and Member in 1842) had been mainly figure subjects to illustrate various poems and novels, and this training stood him in good stead in his "Mansions." The ease with which he introduces the astonishing variety of incidental group or figure which emphasizes the sentiment of his picture, and the accuracy of the appointments and the old furniture with which he clothes empty hall, bare chamber, or deserted garden, make still more actual and vivid his presentment of his architectural subject. As he himself says, "not only the domestic architecture of past ages, but the costumes and habits of England in the olden time are brought before the eye; in attempting this the artist has endeavoured to place himself in the position of a visitor to these ancient edifices, whose fancy peoples the deserted halls, stripped of all movable ornaments and looking damp and cheerless, with the family and household of the 'old English gentleman' surrounded by their everyday comforts, sharing the more rare and courteous hospitalities offered to the guests, or partaking of the boisterous merriment of Christmas gambols." Refer, for instance, to Plate XXXVIII, where the banqueting-hall is made the scene of the boisterous merriment of the mumming at Christmas festivities, and where the morris-dancers, with the hobby-horse, the dragon, the giant and the "salvage man" all take part in the jollity and sport. And how much is added of historical and romantic sentiment to the drawings of the gateway (Plate LI) and the gallery (Plate LII) at Hever Castle by the introduction of Henry VIII. so associated with its past, or in Plate LIX, where the small Elizabethan children have turned the long gallery into their nursery play-room.

The method of execution of the plates, and indeed their quality, vary considerably throughout the work. The earliest ones, drawn, like the others, by Nash himself on the stone from careful drawings which were made on the spot, and carried to the last degree of finish, were in method considerably improved upon in those executed later. The plates included in the second series are more carefully and faithfully drawn, and in their execution he introduces a considerable amount of work with the stump, feeling, as he says, that apart from the gain in chiaroscuro, richness of tint and texture, and freedom of handling, this treatment was better adapted to furnish faithful copies of his original sketches. In those published still later

he carries his technique a step farther and makes use of the lithotint —recently introduced by Hullmandel—a process by which the brush is employed, and which enabled him in these later plates to obtain a painter-like result, both brilliant and powerful.

The ground covered by the work may broadly be described as the Tudor and Elizabethan periods, a time which, as Nash says, was "an era most prolific of splendour and originality of style, stimulated by the advance of national prosperity and greatness, and when the arts may be said in this country to have first begun to flourish." True, there are a few plates such as those illustrating Ightham Moat House (Plate LXXV), Ockwells, Berkshire (Plate LXXVII), and Hever Castle (Plate LI), which give examples of Gothic work as yet untouched by foreign influence. The title-word "mansions" indeed itself precludes any large reference to architecture of an early date.

In days when the feudal system obtained, and when the main and dominating factor of a dwelling was that it should be easily defended in case of assault, the word "home," with all that it connotes in the way of arrangements made for family life or for the privacy of the individual members of the family and their comfort, was one of little meaning. Life was led in common; lord and retainers shared the common hall, and fared and fed together. The arrangement of plan called for by this more primitive state of living it is easy to trace later, as adapted to a changed order of national life, in the manor house of the sixteenth century. Here the chief apartment is still the common hall, generally with its screen and minstrels' gallery, and with an entrance porch. But the size of the hall and its proportion to the rest of the house had by this time become considerably reduced. It now invariably appears with a bay-window, a feature introduced about a century before the Tudor period. This was almost universally placed at one end of the hall, and extended in height from the floor to the ceiling. Approached through the screen were the kitchen and other apartments, including a room for the reception of guests. This usually had a bay-window looking on to the quadrangle. On the first floor were the "chambers," which were reached by a staircase, as yet not treated as the important feature into which it subsequently developed. Andrew Boorde, "of Physike Doctor," in 1547, laid down certain principles in his "Dyetorie or Regiment of Healthe" as to points to be observed when building a house. He says: "Make the hall of such fashion that the parlour be annexed to the head of the hall, and the buttrye and pantrye at

the lower ende thereof; the cellar under the pantrye sett somewhat at a base; the kechyn sett somewhat at a base from the buttrye and pantrye; coming with an entrie within, by the wall of the buttrie; the pastrie house and the larder annexed to the kechyn. Then divyde the logginges by the circuit of the quadrivial courte, and let the gatehouse be opposite, or against the hall doore; not directly, but the hall doore standyng abase of the gatehouse in the middle of the front enteringe into the place. Let the prevye chamber be annexed to the great chamber of estate, with other chambers necessary for the buildinge; so that many of the chambers may have a prospecte into the chapell."

The arrangement of the building was sometimes quadrangular—the "quadrivial courte" of Boorde—sometimes the front containing the hall was recessed with wings at either end. Towards the end of the century tower gateways, either square as at Cranbourne (Plate CIII) and Montacute (Plate LXXVI), or with octagonal towers on each side as at Brereton (Plate XXII), were used for the entrance. In appearance little of the fortified character was retained beyond, in certain cases, the battlements with which the walls were surrounded, more for ornament than use—a feature we find in churches of the period. The treatment of the doorways and porches was essentially the same as that applied to ecclesiastical buildings (see, for instance, Plate CIV), and the style of ornament and the detail are identical. The earliest form of the bay-window—so universal a characteristic in this style—was square on plan, and later became splayed at the angles, or even semi-circular, as at Thornbury Castle. Much care and thought were directed to the treatment of the chimney-stacks, which were either of stone or brick. Examples of the latter material, showing to what an extent the elaboration of design and detail was carried, are given in Plate XXVIII, Compton Wynyates. Terra-cotta was introduced for certain dressings and enrichments by Girolamo da Trevigi in the first half of the sixteenth century. Plates XCI and XCII, showing the entrance doorway and the frontage to the court of Sutton Place (the date of which is about 1520), give an example of the use of this material, showing in the detail a strongly pronounced Italian feeling. This building affords an opportunity of seeing at its earliest the introduction of those foreign *motifs*, that were destined to modify and transform our English architecture, and was one of the first to be affected by the incoming tide of the Renaissance that was on the point of sweeping over the land.

It was rather at the second period of Henry VII.'s reign, after all opposition to his title had passed away, than with the reign of Henry VIII., that England, as Freeman says, "came within the range of those general causes of change which were now beginning to affect all Europe. The revival of learning, as it is called, was now spreading from Italy into other lands . . . mediæval art now entered on its latest phase immediately before its final overthrow. The architectural style of the time loses the aspiring lines of earlier times, and gives us instead lavishness and intricacy of ornament. . . . Houses had now quite outstripped the alternatives of a period when the choice lay between the fortress and the simple manor-house. In the latter part of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, we come to palaces as distinguished from castles." But, as the same historian points out, the Renaissance spirit that first showed itself in minor degree in the designs of tombs and woodwork did not affect architecture, as distinguished from these, till the time of Edward VI., or the middle of the sixteenth century.

Again, though this revival of the Italian style was introduced by the Protector Somerset, who employed John of Padua on Somerset House, it failed to maintain its hold as applied to whole buildings. The Renaissance forms were not accepted in their entirety, but, preserving purely English outlines, the details became a strange mixture of corrupt Gothic and corrupt Italian.

The very rare work of John Shute, "paynter and architecte" (of which only two copies are known), "The First and Chiefe Grounds of Architecture used in all the Ancient and Famous Monyments" (1563), shows by its title how in England now, as in Italy during the preceding century, it was considered of obligation on the architect to turn back for education and inspiration to the buildings —the Roman buildings especially—of the past. And there was every opportunity for the display of the new style and the changed architectural ideals. The growing wealth of the country and its more assured state were favouring circumstances that led to an immense development of building, primarily, indeed, of a domestic character. For ecclesiastical buildings there was little need "in a time," as Freeman says, "when more churches were pulled down than were built." The country accordingly became covered with houses of all sizes—palaces, manor-houses, burgher dwellings in towns, solitary farm-houses, cottages in the village street. The spirit

of building was abroad in all classes, and, to quote Harrison, "It is a worlde to see how divers men being bent to buildinge, and having a delectable view in spending of their goods by that trade doe dailie imagine new devises of their own to guide their workmen withall."

Many of the most important architectural works begun in the reign of Elizabeth were not completed till well on in the reign of James I., so that what we are accustomed to call Elizabethan design may be said to have obtained up to the time of Inigo Jones, whose earlier work indeed was less Classic in its nature, and was merely a modification of the Elizabethan method.

In the manuscript folio by John Thorpe, now in the Soane Museum, are set forth plans and elevations showing the ideal of an architect of the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The general form of his plans is that of three sides of a quadrangle, often surrounded by an open corridor, the portico in the centre being treated as an open arcade, finished by a turreted cupola. Of "Burghley juxta Stamford" (Plate XXIV) the manuscript gives plans, as also a plan of Holland House (Plates LIII and LIV). His work at Audley End (Plates VIII and IX) Thorpe completed about 1616, quite at the end of his life. Robert and Huntingdon Smithson, father and son, have to share with him the credit of the design of Wollaton Hall (Plates XCVII and XCVIII), of which the elevation is given in the manuscript of the latter. Theirs also is Bolsover Castle; its hall is shown on Plate XII.

It is, perhaps, as Kerr thinks, Hatfield House that offers us the best example of an Elizabethan plan. It shows us that while the plan was based upon the principle of the earlier or Tudor form, it has now assumed a more scientific and more systematic character, and has been adapted to the stateliness and ceremony of life befitting a great noble and his household. In all cases the hall still is the main feature of the building, but it has, with a view to purposes of state, increased in size. It has retained its oriel or bay window. The staircase, no longer small and inconvenient, now occupies a considerable portion of the mansion. As Aubrey, describing Verulam House, says: "In the middle was a delicate staircase of wood, which was curiously carved; and on the post of every interstice was some pretty figure, as a grave divine with his book and spectacles, a mendicant friar, and not one twice." Knowle (Plate LVI), Hatfield House (Plate XLIX), and Aldermaston (Plate II) offer

excellent examples of elaborate and interesting features of the kind. The gallery now is lofty, wide, and often more than 100 feet in length. Hardwicke Hall (Plate XLVI), Knowle (Plate LIX), and Haddon Hall (Plate XL) illustrate well this feature. The treatment of the façades shows, as has been pointed out above, a growing use of classic detail and of the Italian orders. But the correct proportions of the latter are not attended to. The columns and pilasters are usually on pedestals, and are often banded by square blocks, and decorated by diamond-shaped projections, a distinct characteristic of the style. The entablatures are usually broken, and parapets are terminated by the familiar flat scroll or strap-work.

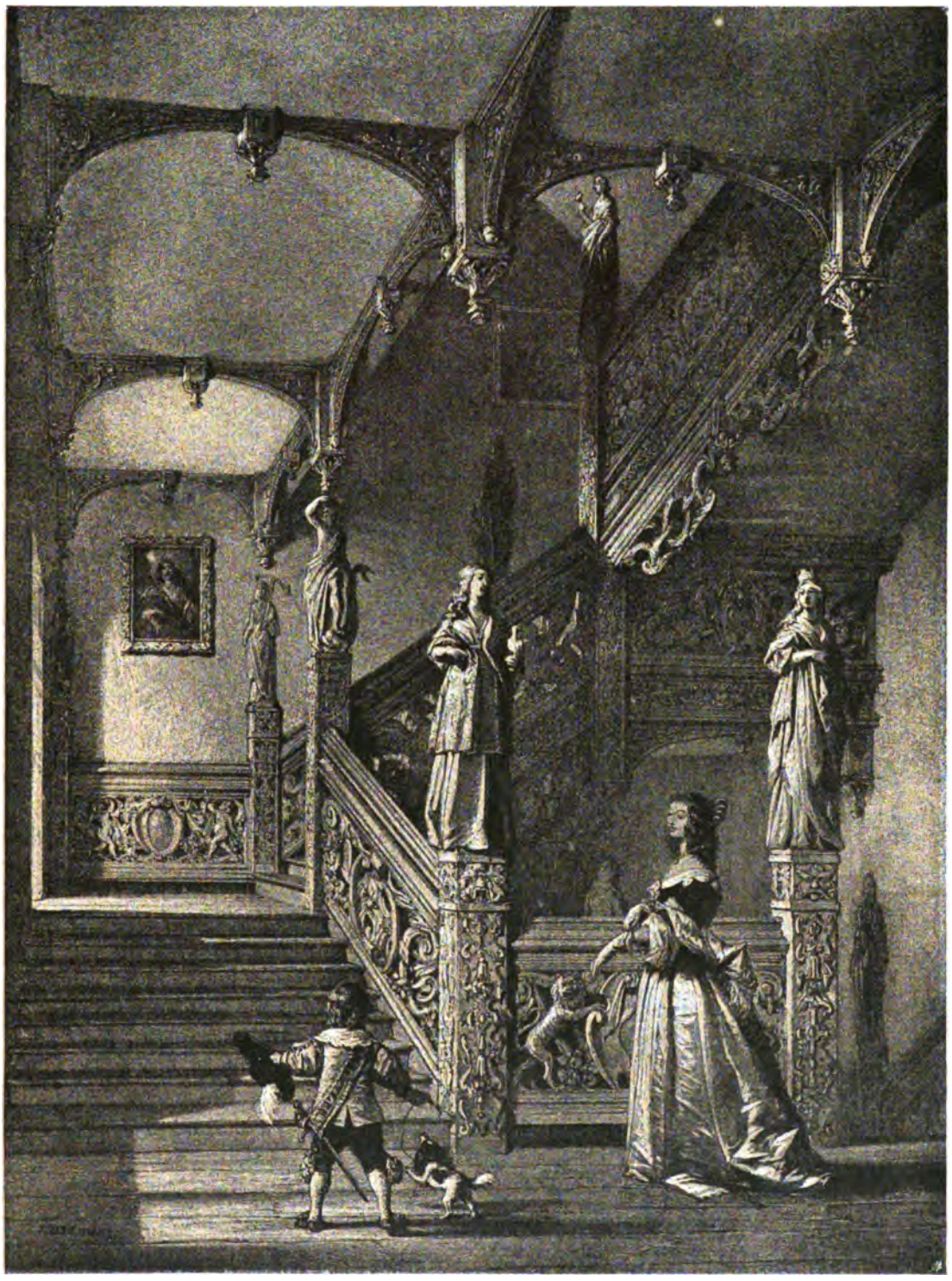
In the interior much sumptuous material and workmanship now assert themselves. The various rooms were, as Bacon says in his "Essay on Building," treated as "delicate and rich cabinets, daintily paved, richly hanged, glazed with crystalline glass; and all other elegancy that may be thought upon." Panelling, occasionally inlaid under Italian influence like that at Sizergh (Plate LXXXIV), took the place on the walls of the tapestry-hanging of the early period. In especial the chimney-pieces were elaborated, and were of marble, or wood or both, richly sculptured, and on gallery and screen and doorway was massed almost a superabundancy of carved ornament.

Particularly characteristic of Elizabethan architecture is the invention shown in the treatment of the ceiling of the parlour, dining-room, or hall. There is an infinite amount of thought and design manifested in this plaster work, and illustrated by many of the plates. It is noteworthy that here, perhaps, the English spirit held out longest against the foreign or classic influence, and few of the examples, even of the latest type, show as much of the Renaissance feeling as is revealed in the other portions of the building.

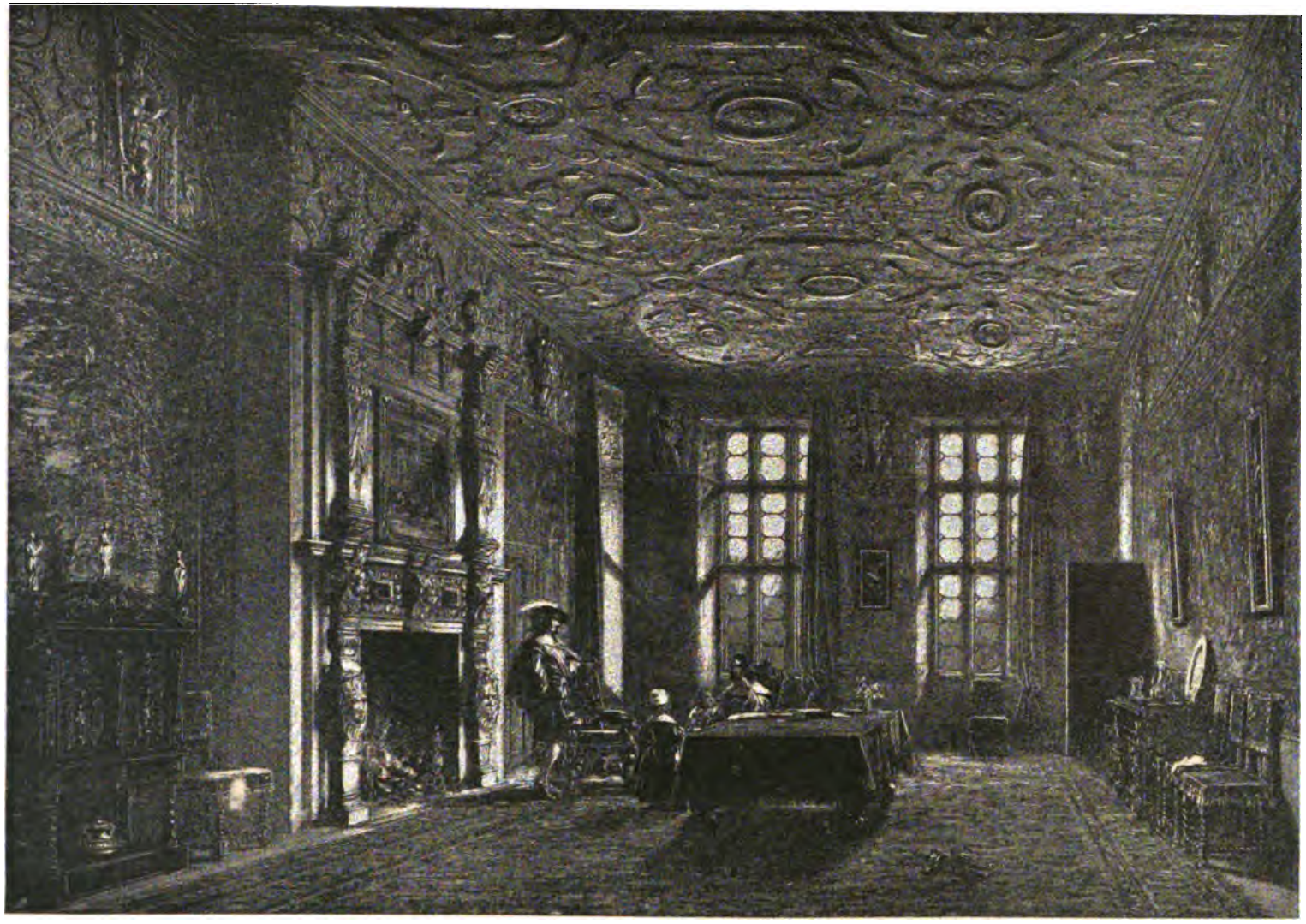
C. HARRISON TOWNSEND.

ADLINGTON, CHESHIRE: THE HALL.

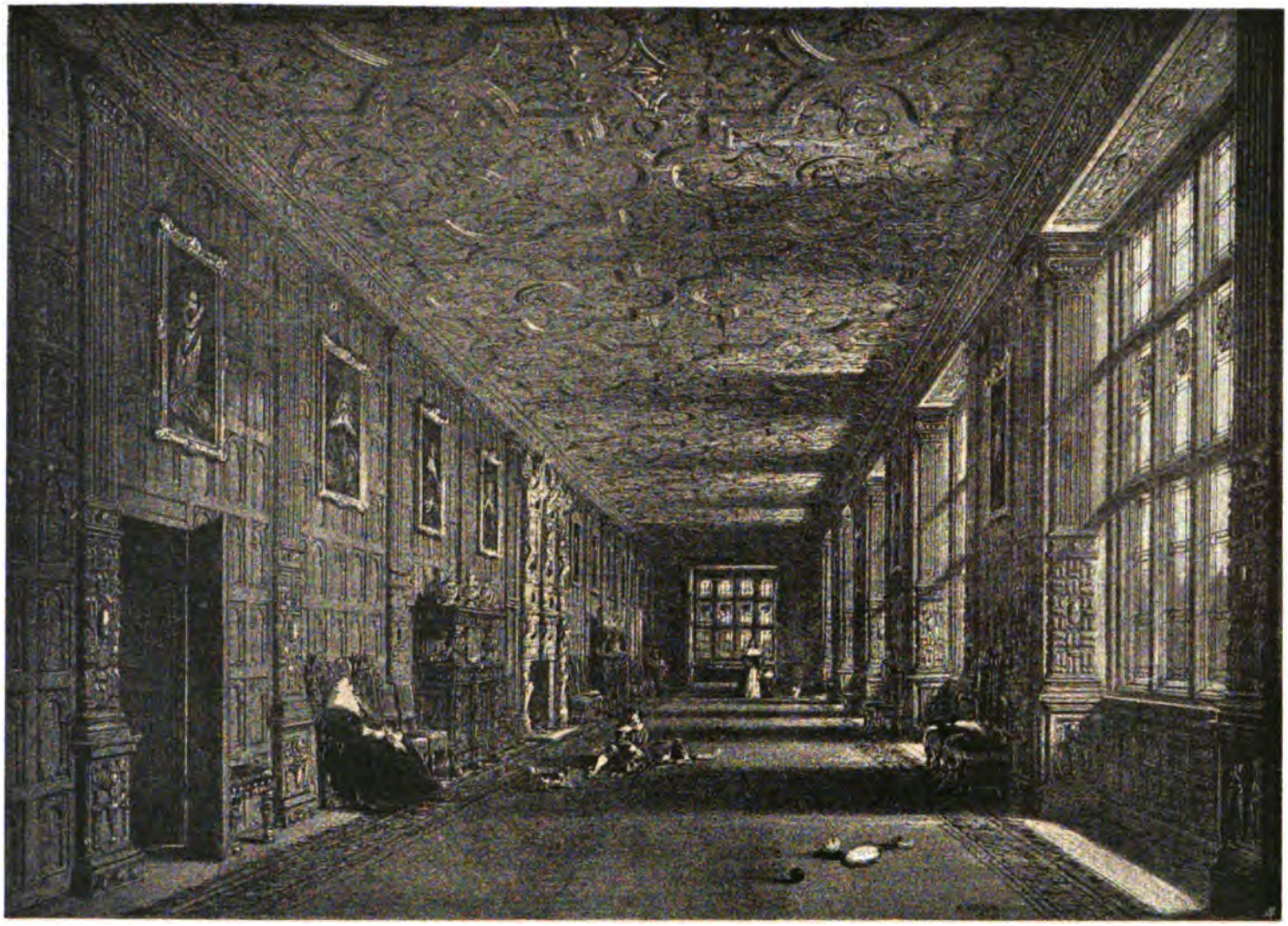
PL. II.



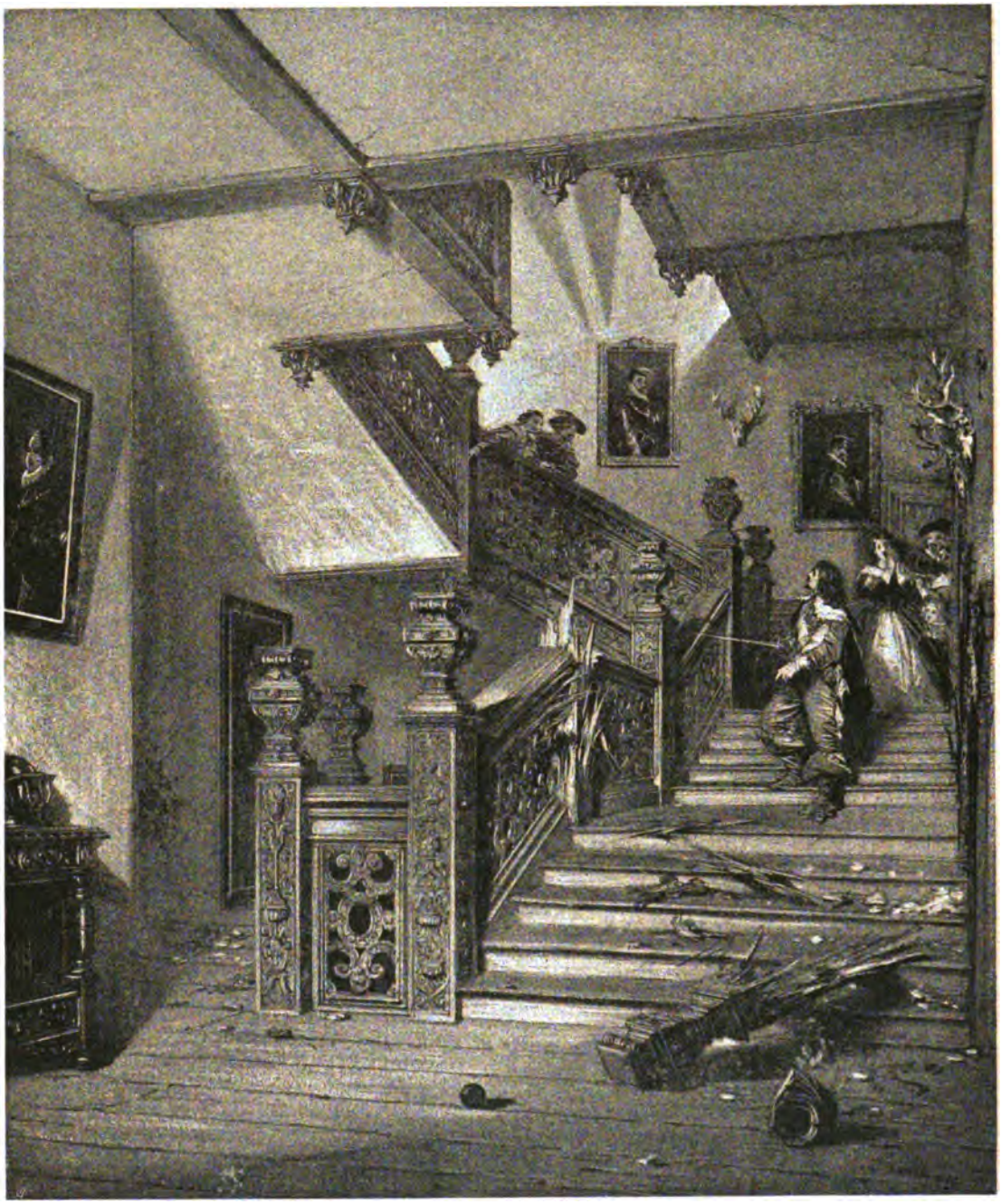
ALDERMASTON, BERKSHIRE: THE STAIRCASE.



ASTON HALL, WARWICKSHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.



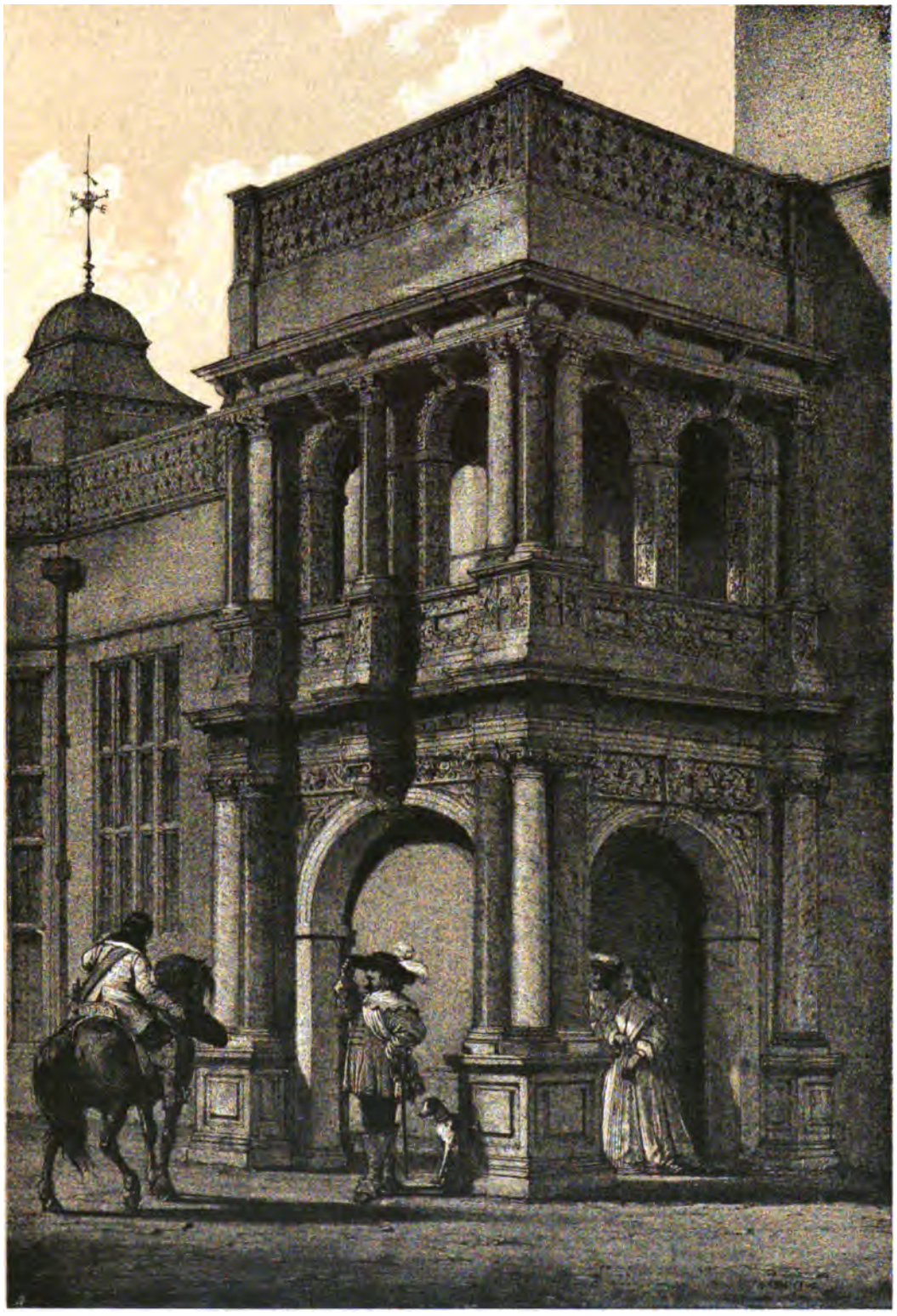
ASTON HALL, WARWICKSHIRE: THE GALLERY.



ASTON HALL, WARWICKSHIRE: THE STAIRCASE.

ATHELHAMPTON, DORSETSHIRE.

ATHELHAMPTON, DORSETSHIRE: THE HALL.



AUDLEY END, ESSEX: THE PORCH.

AUDLEY END, ESSEX: THE HALL.

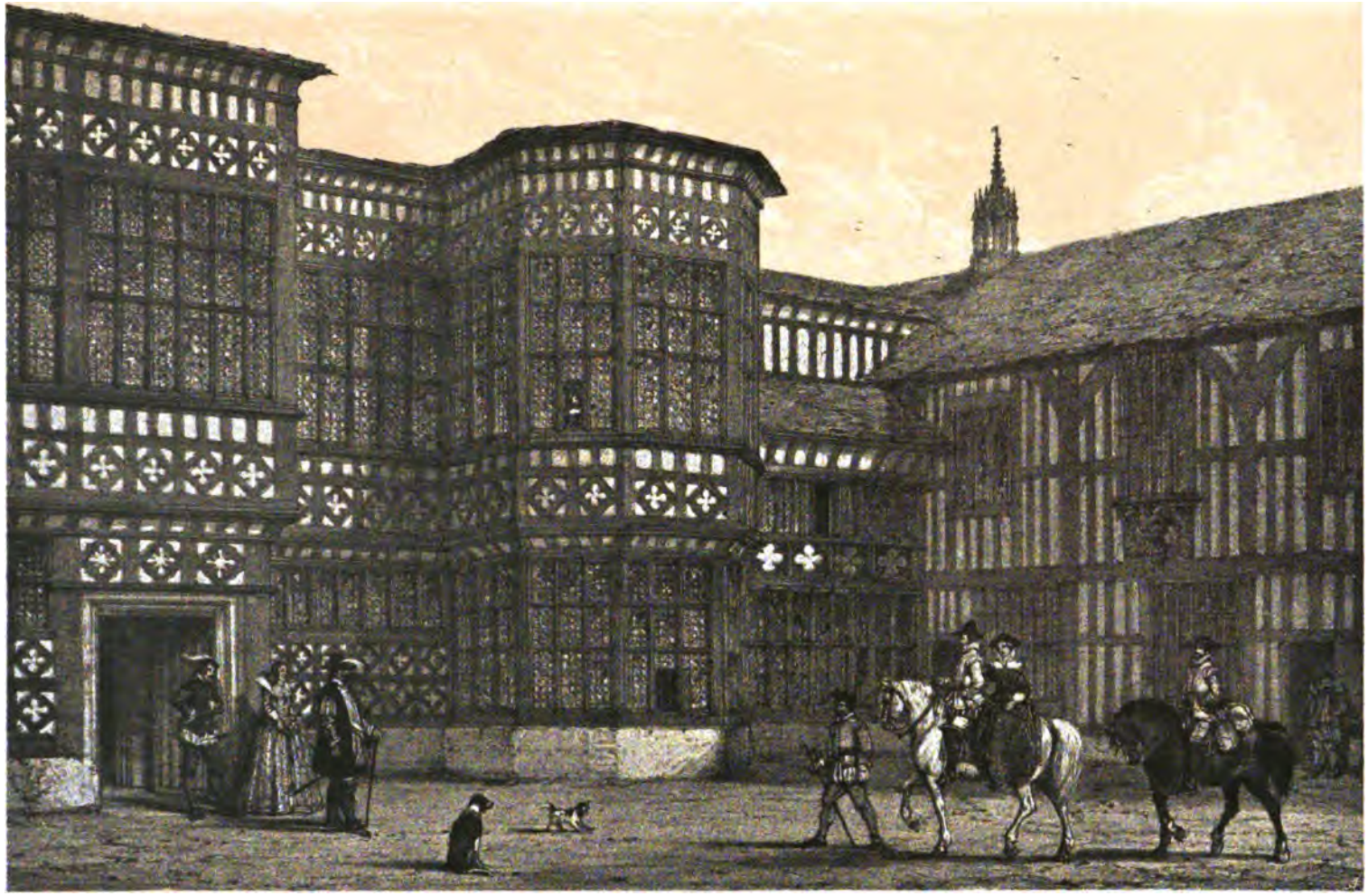
BEDDINGTON, SURREY: THE HALL.

BINGHAM MELCOMBE, DORSETSHIRE.

BOLSOVER CASTLE, DERBYSHIRE: THE HALL.

BORWICK HALL, LANCASHIRE.

BOUGHTON MALHERBE, KENT: THE DRAWING ROOM.

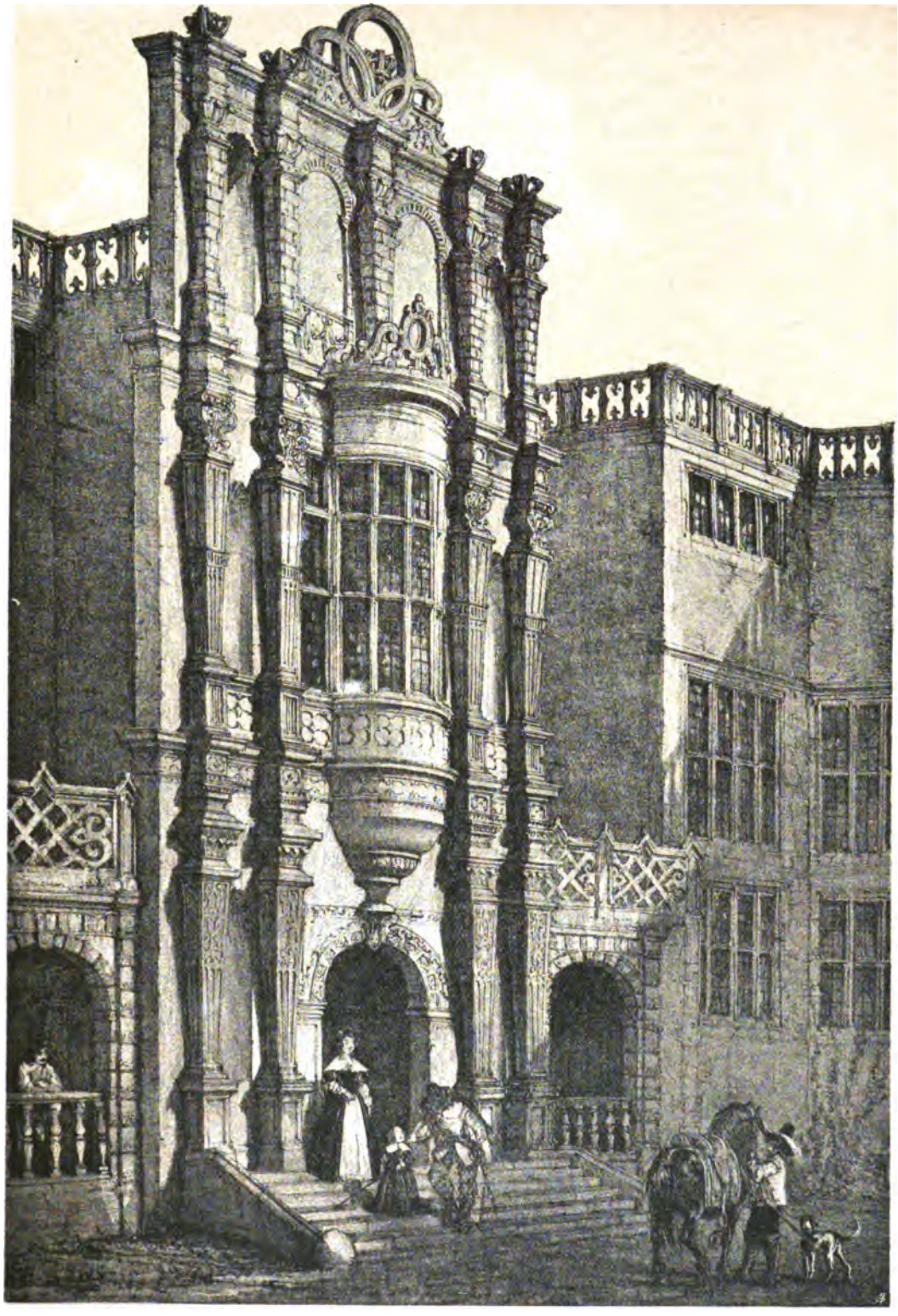


BRAMHALL HALL, CHESHIRE.

BRAMHALL HALL, CHESHIRE: BAY WINDOW IN HALL.

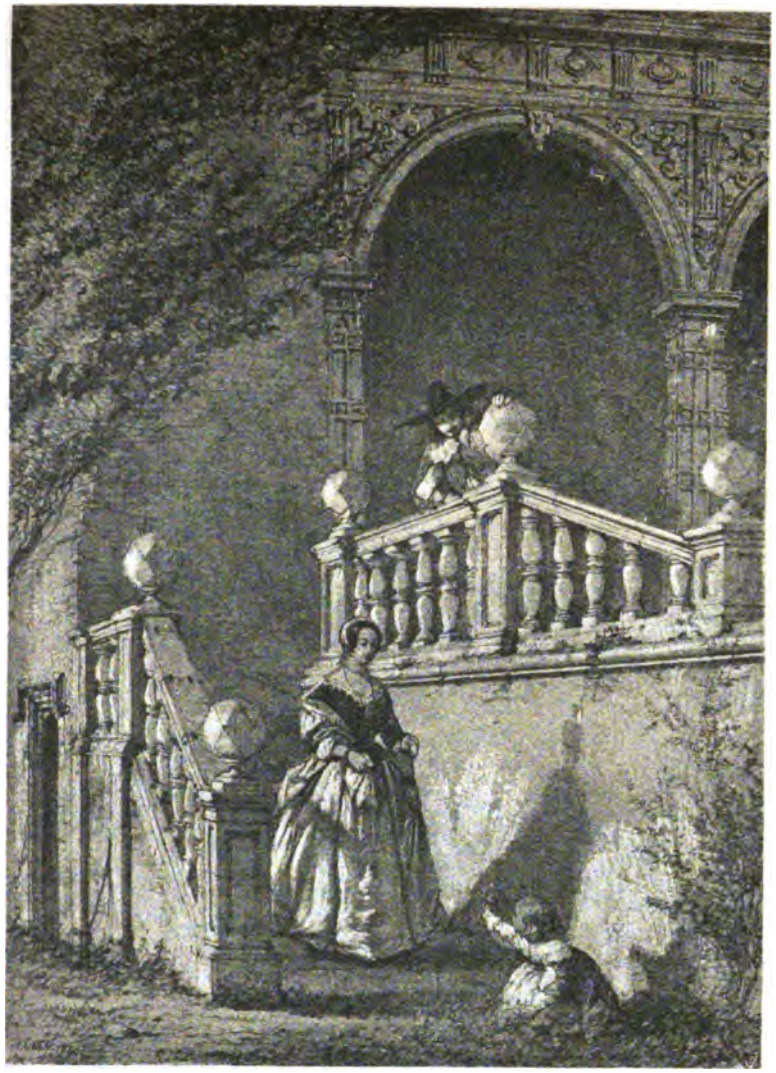
BRAMHALL HALL, CHESHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.

BRAMHALL HALL, CHESHIRE: BANQUETING ROOM.

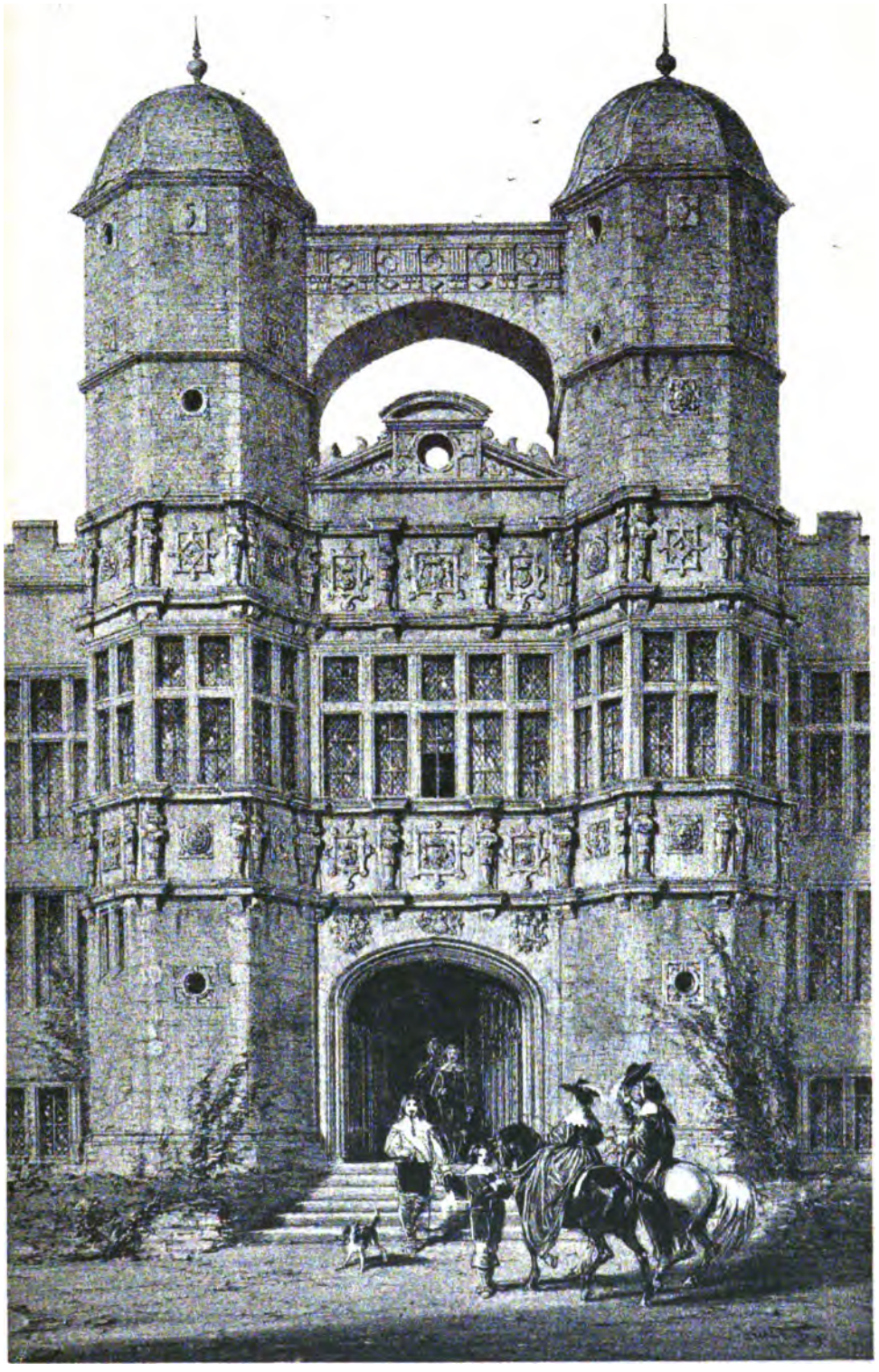


BRAMSHILL, HANTS.

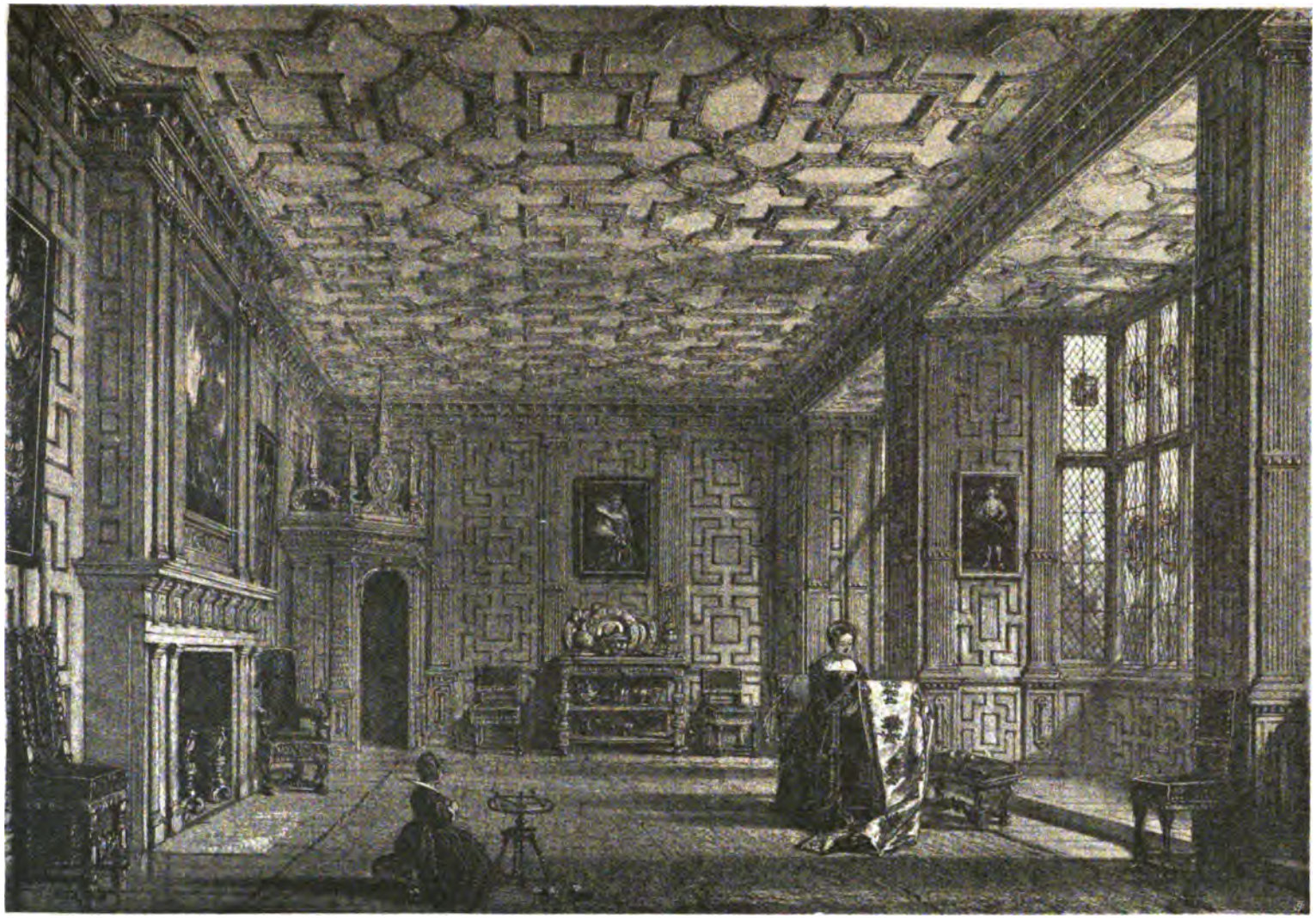
BRAMSHILL, HANTS: THE TERRACE.



BRAMSHILL, HANTS: STAIRS TO THE TERRACE, AND POSTERN GATE.



BRERETON CHESHIRE.

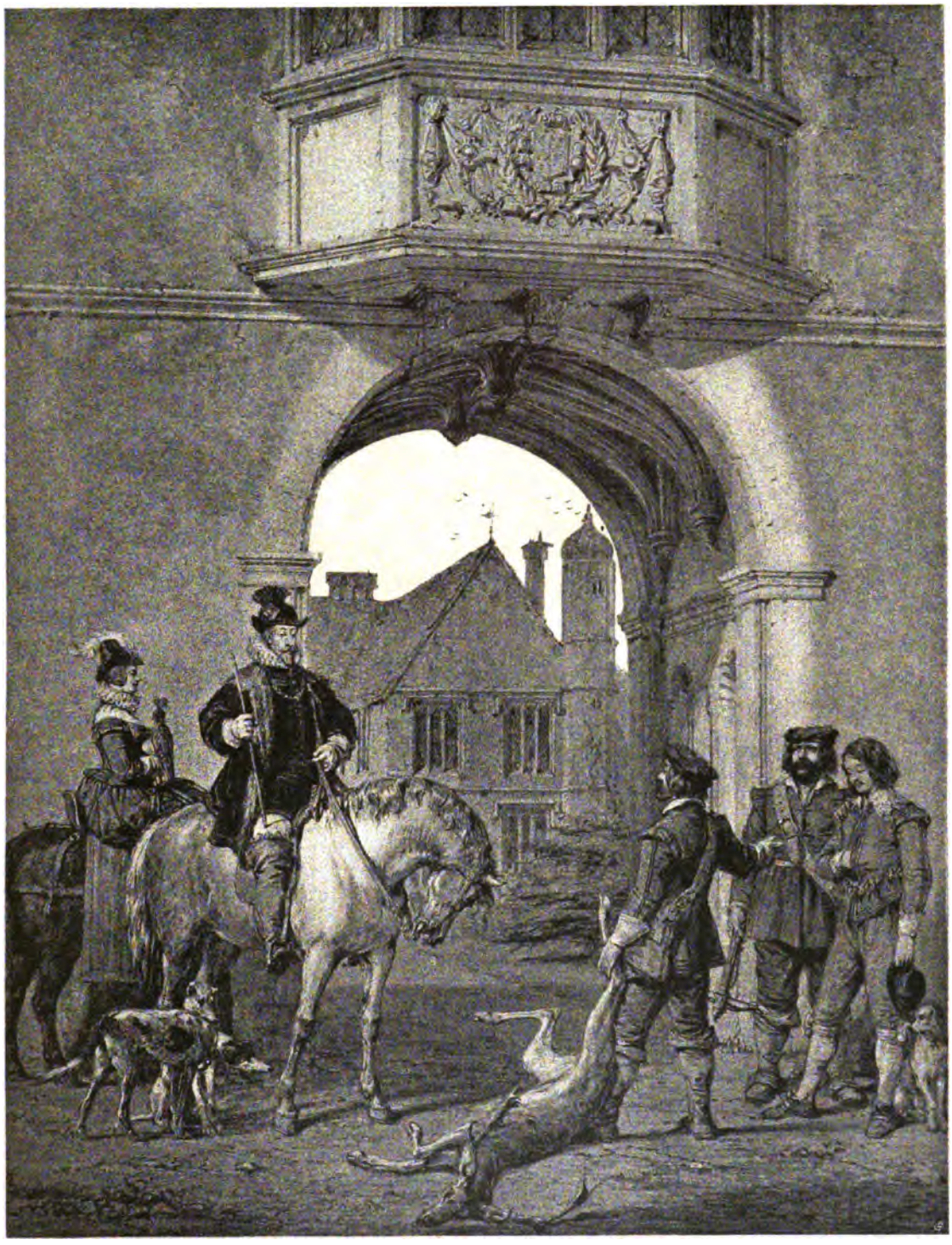


BROUGHTON CASTLE, OXFORDSHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.

BURLEIGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

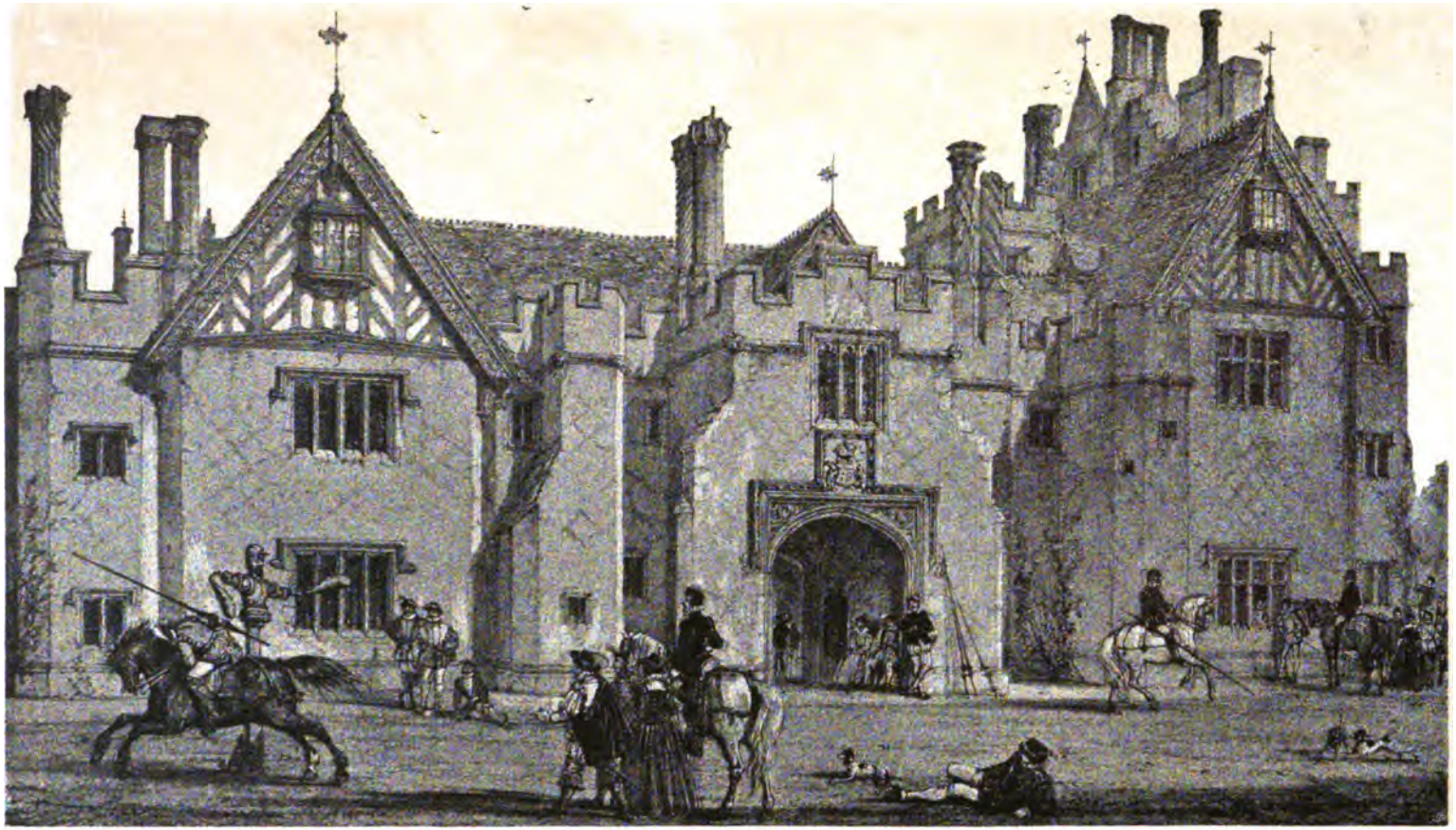
BURLEIGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: THE STAIRCASE.

PL. XXVI.



CHARLCOTE, WARWICKSHIRE.

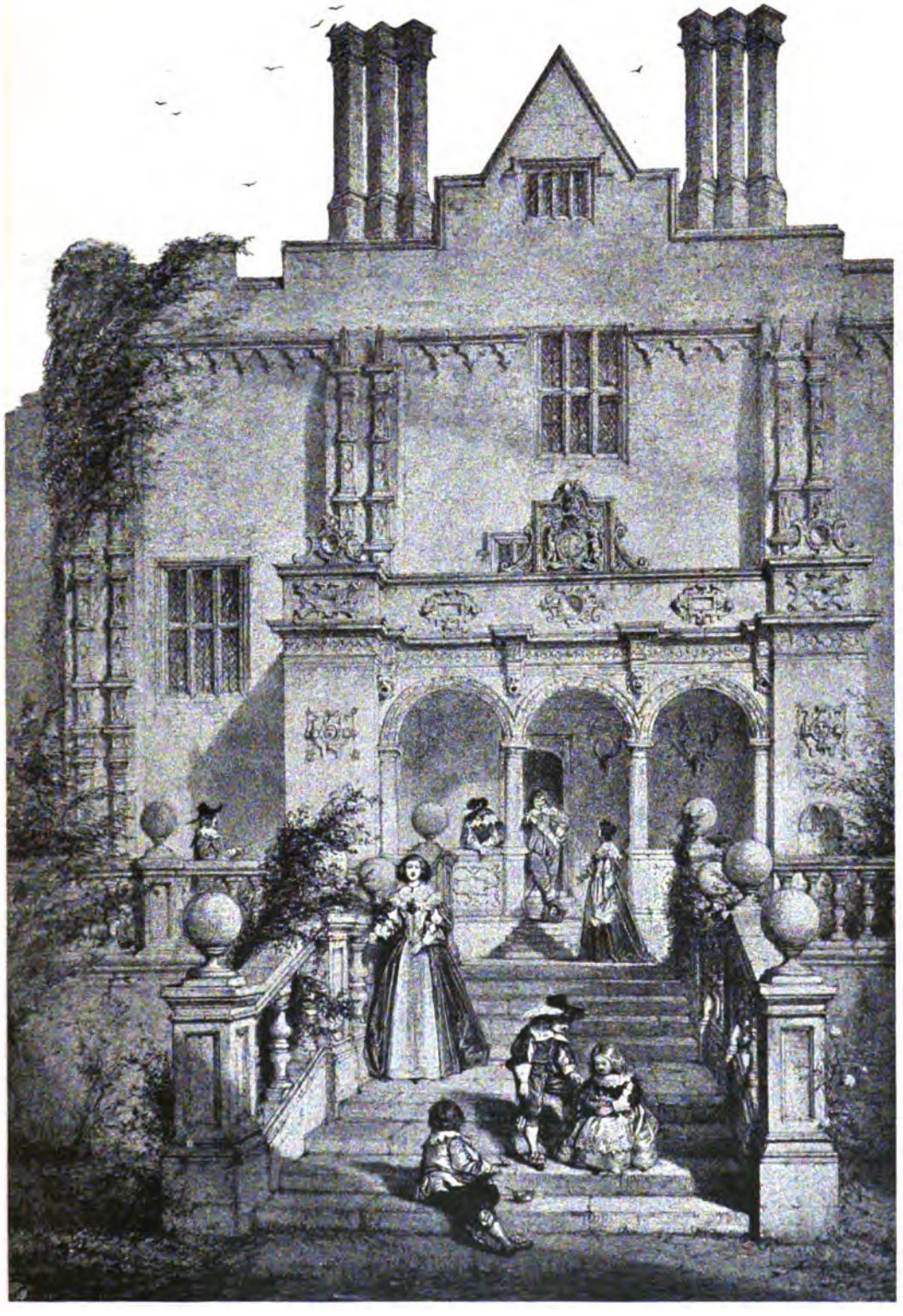
CHASTLETON, OXFORDSHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.



COMPTON WYNYATES, WARWICKSHIRE.

COMPTON-WYNYATES, WARWICKSHIRE: THE HALL.

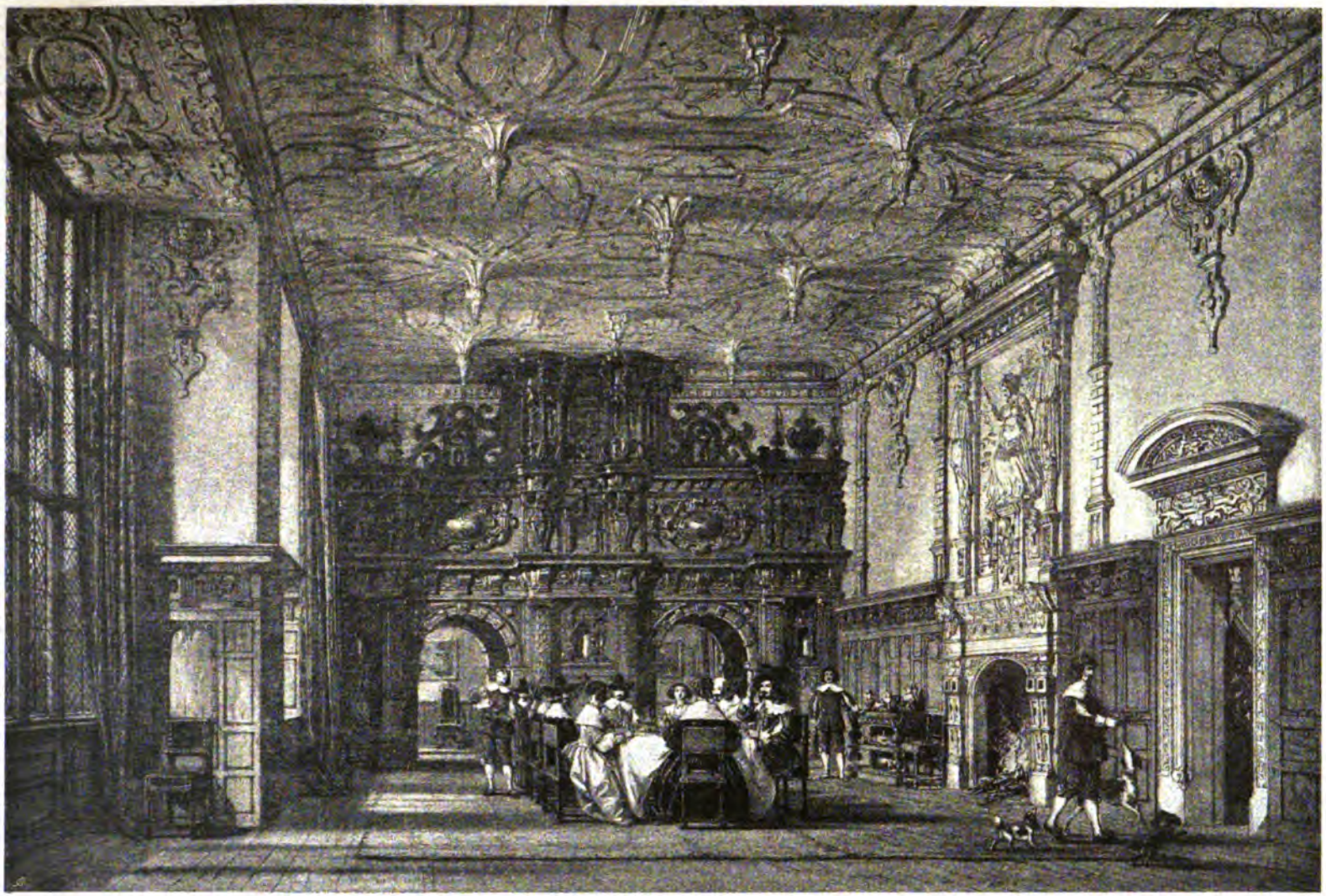
PL. XXX.



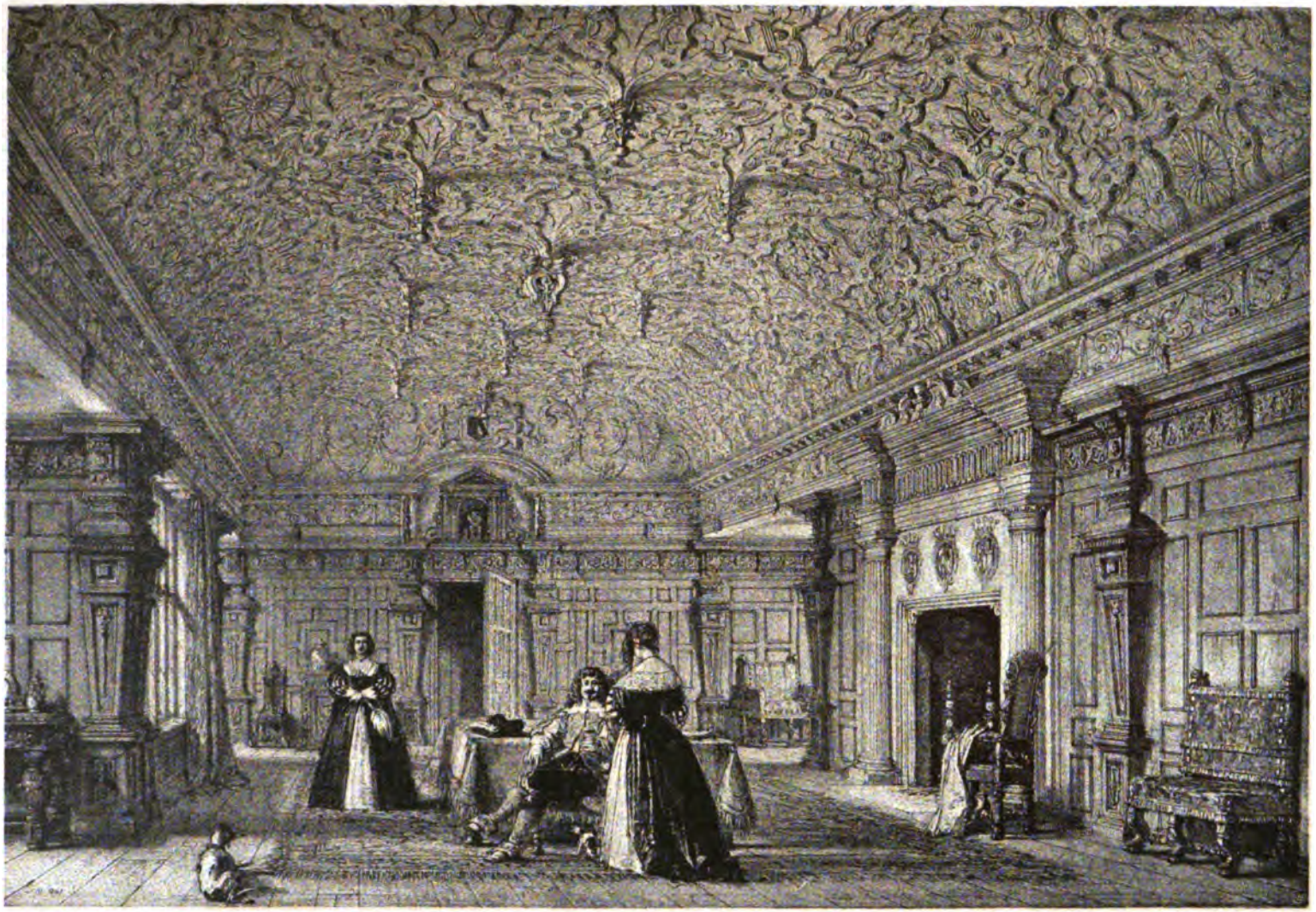
CRANBOURNE, DORSETSHIRE.

CREWE HALL, CHESHIRE: THE STAIRCASE.

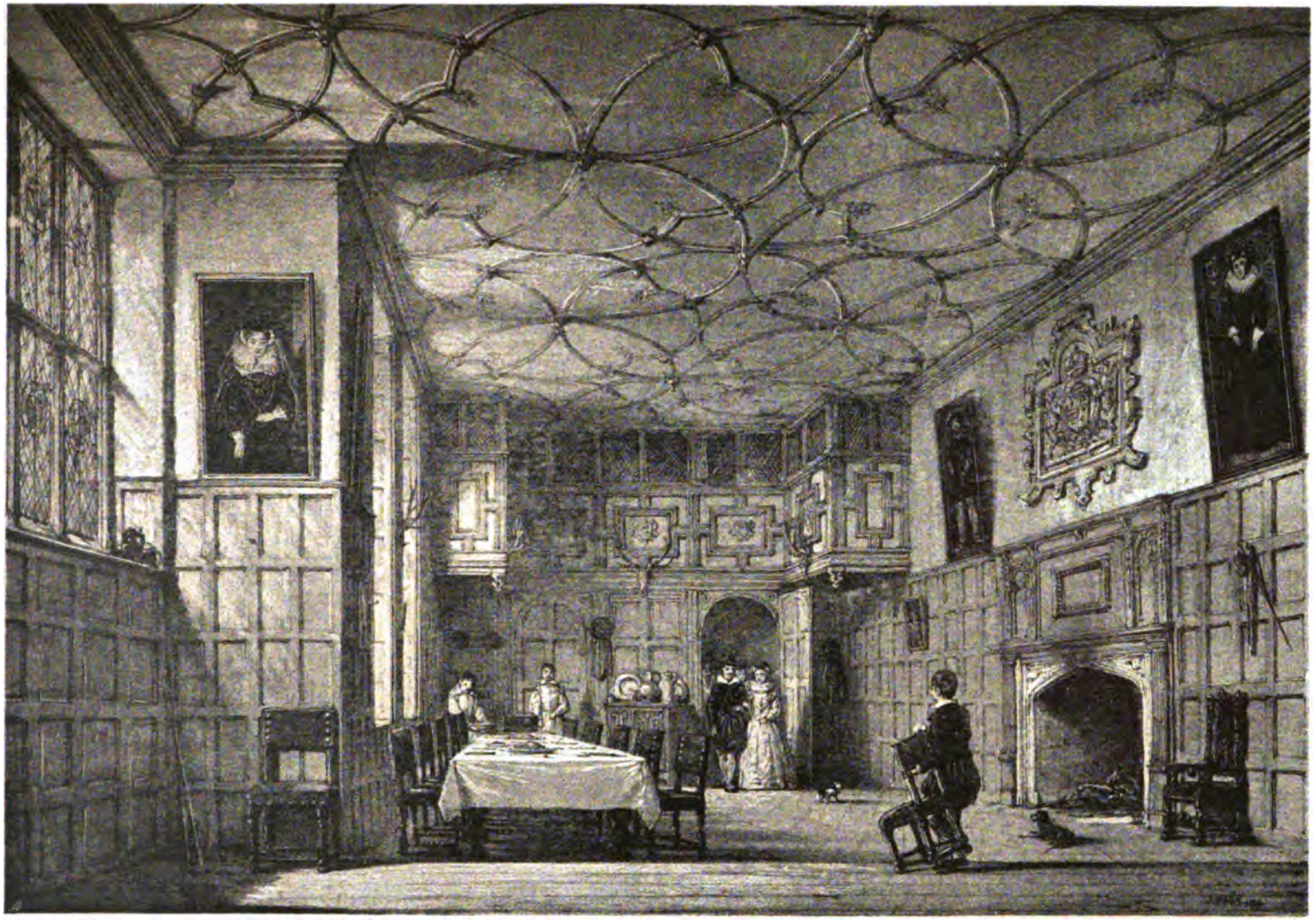
CREWE HALL, CHESHIRE: CARVED PARLOUR.



CREWE HALL CHESHIRE: THE HALL.



DORFOLD, CHESHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.

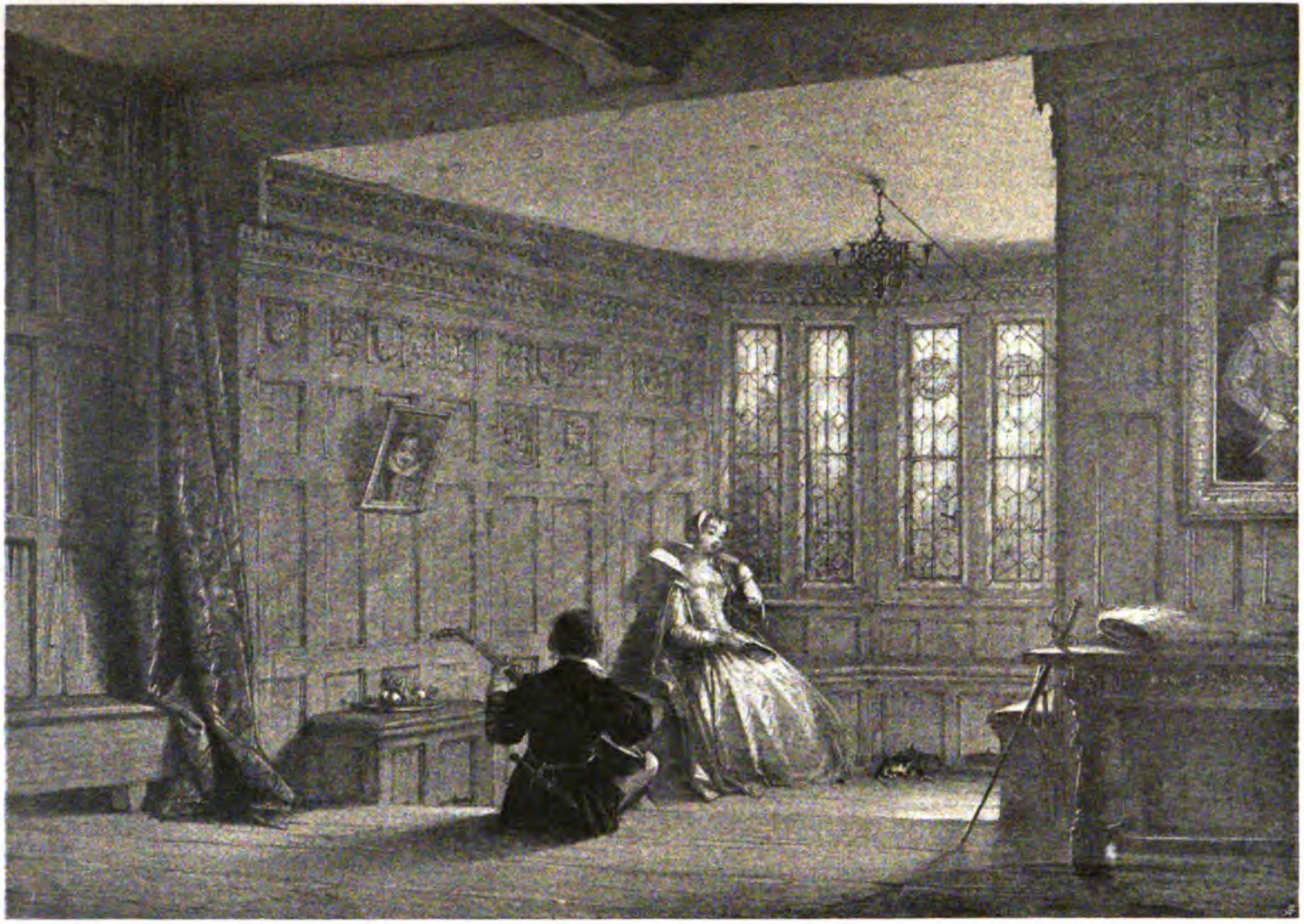


FRANKS, KENT: THE HALL.

HADDON HALL DERBYSHIRE: THE DRAWING ROOM.

HADDON HALL DERBYSHIRE: THE CHAPEL.

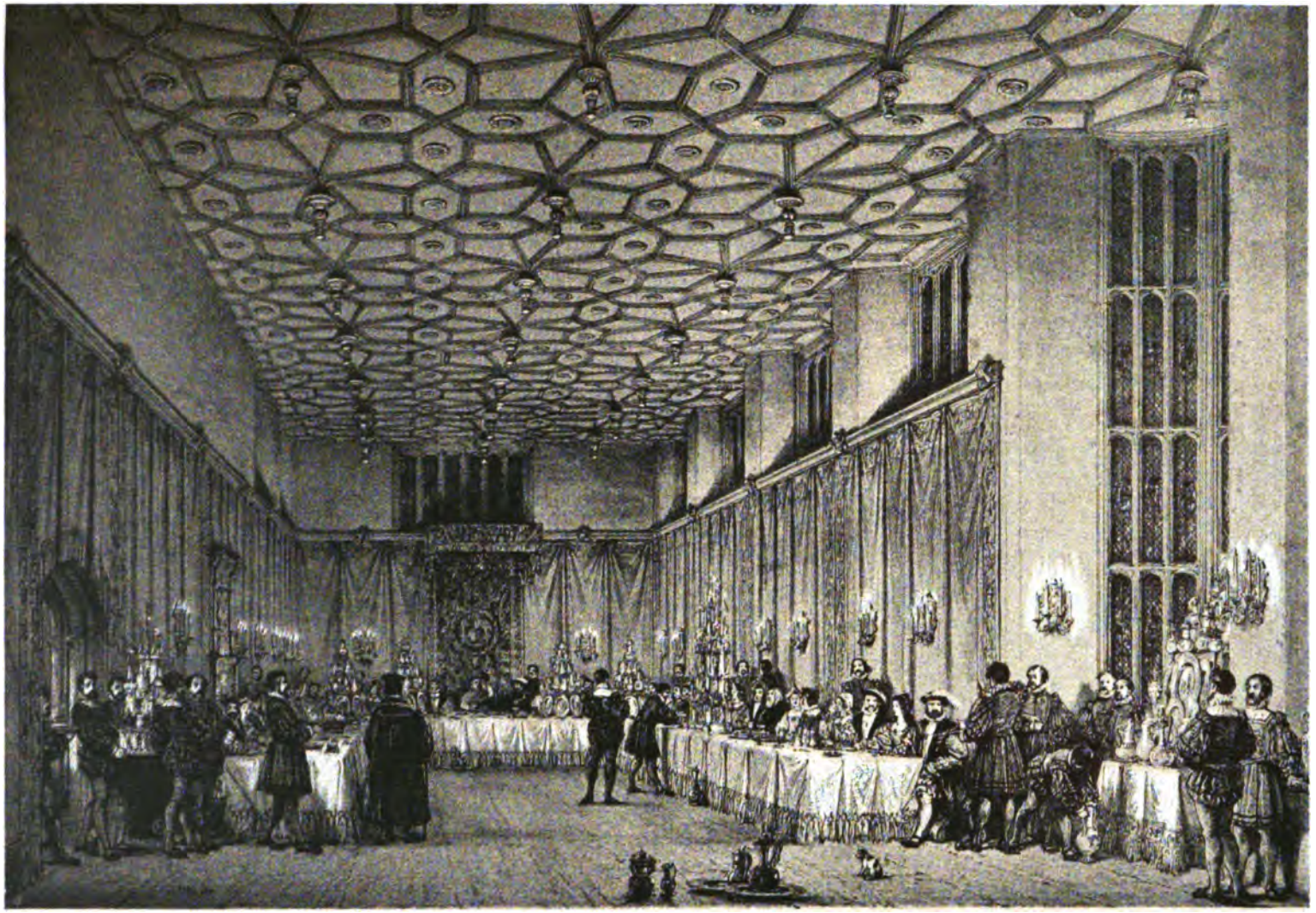
HADDON HALL DERBYSHIRE: THE BANQUETING HALL.



HADDON HALL DERBYSHIRE: BAY WINDOW IN DINING ROOM.

HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE: THE LONG GALLERY.

HAMPTON COURT, MIDDLESEX: THE HALL.

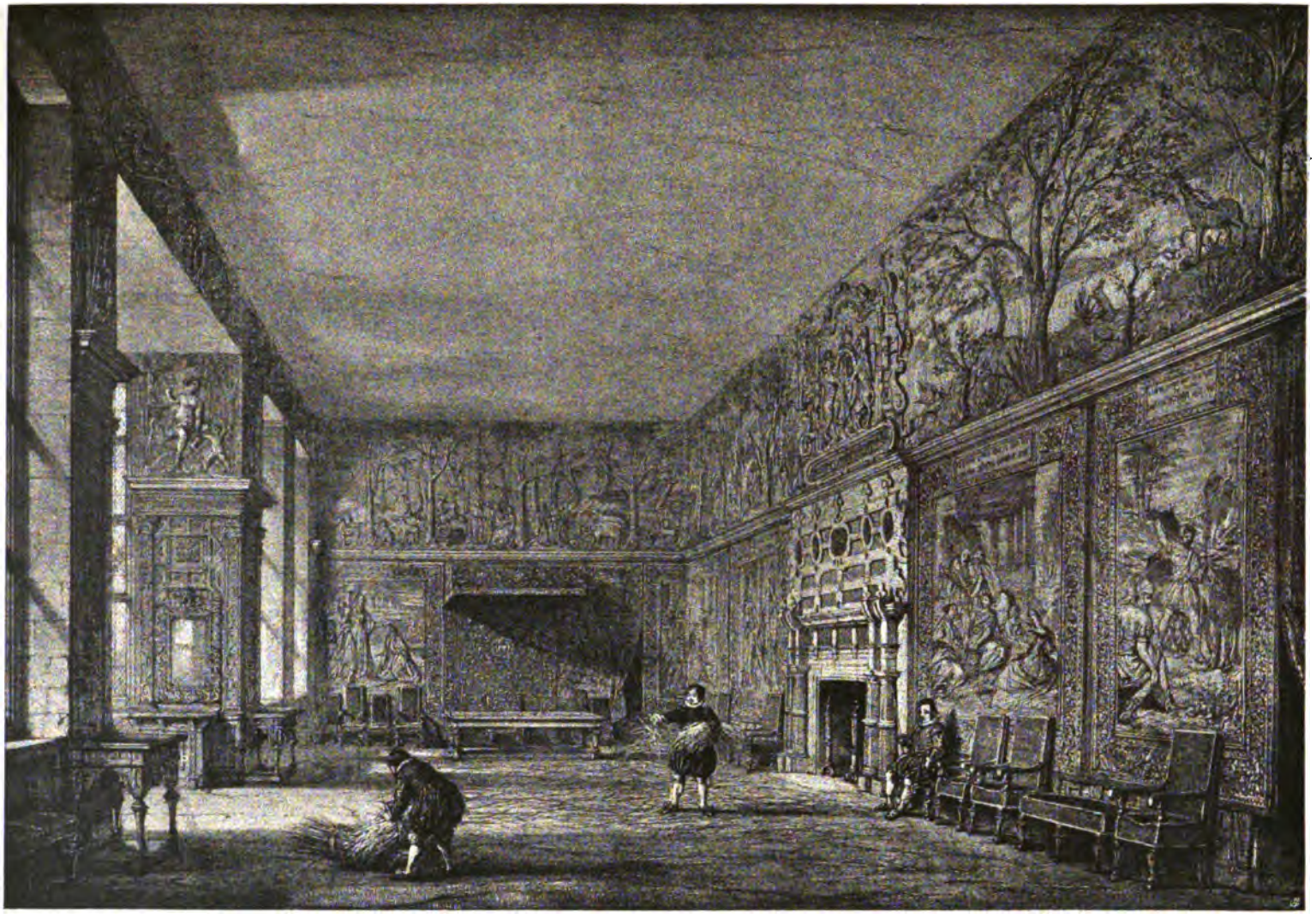


HAMPTON COURT, MIDDLESEX: THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

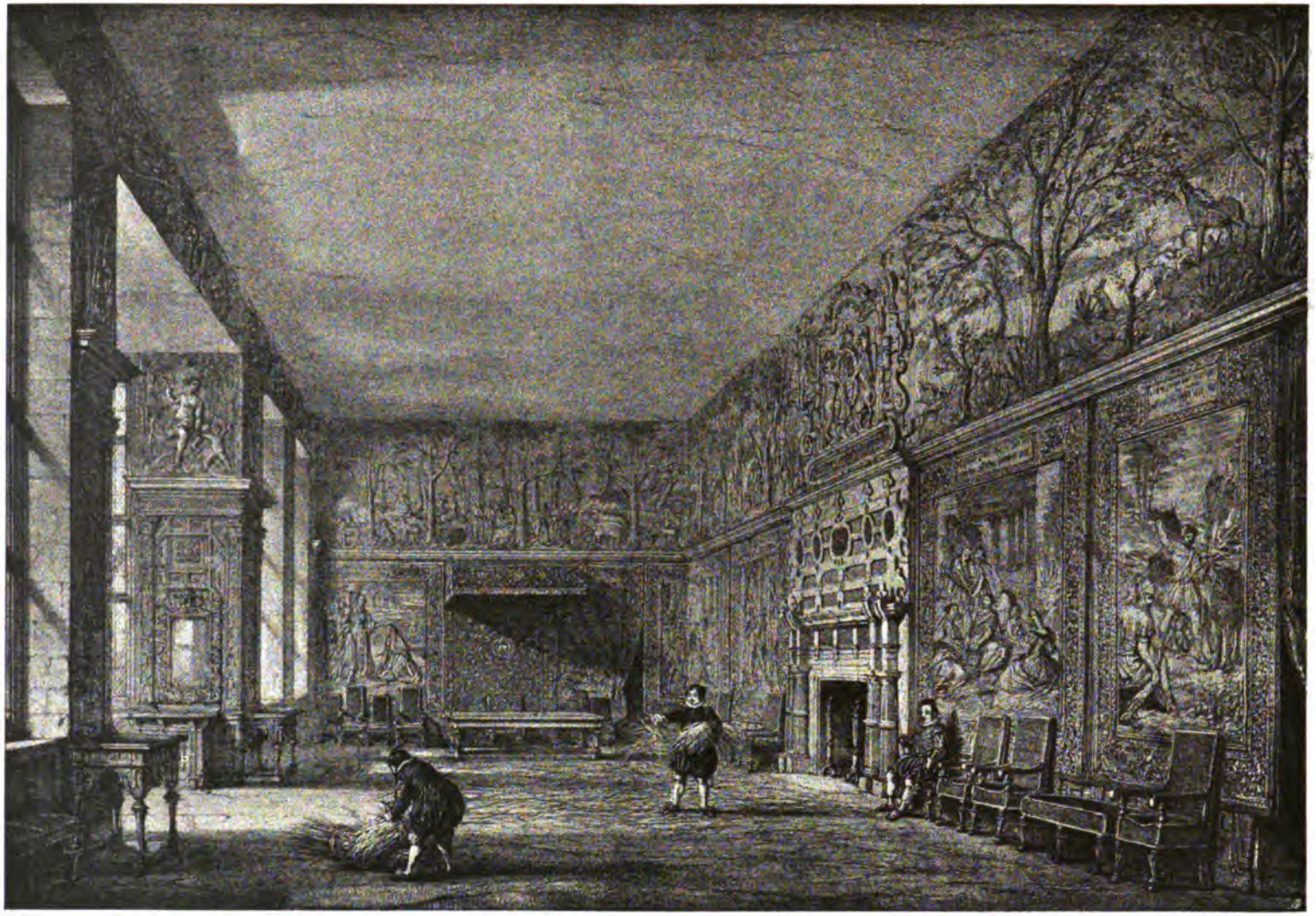
PL. XLIII.

HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE

HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE: THE GRAND STAIRCASE.



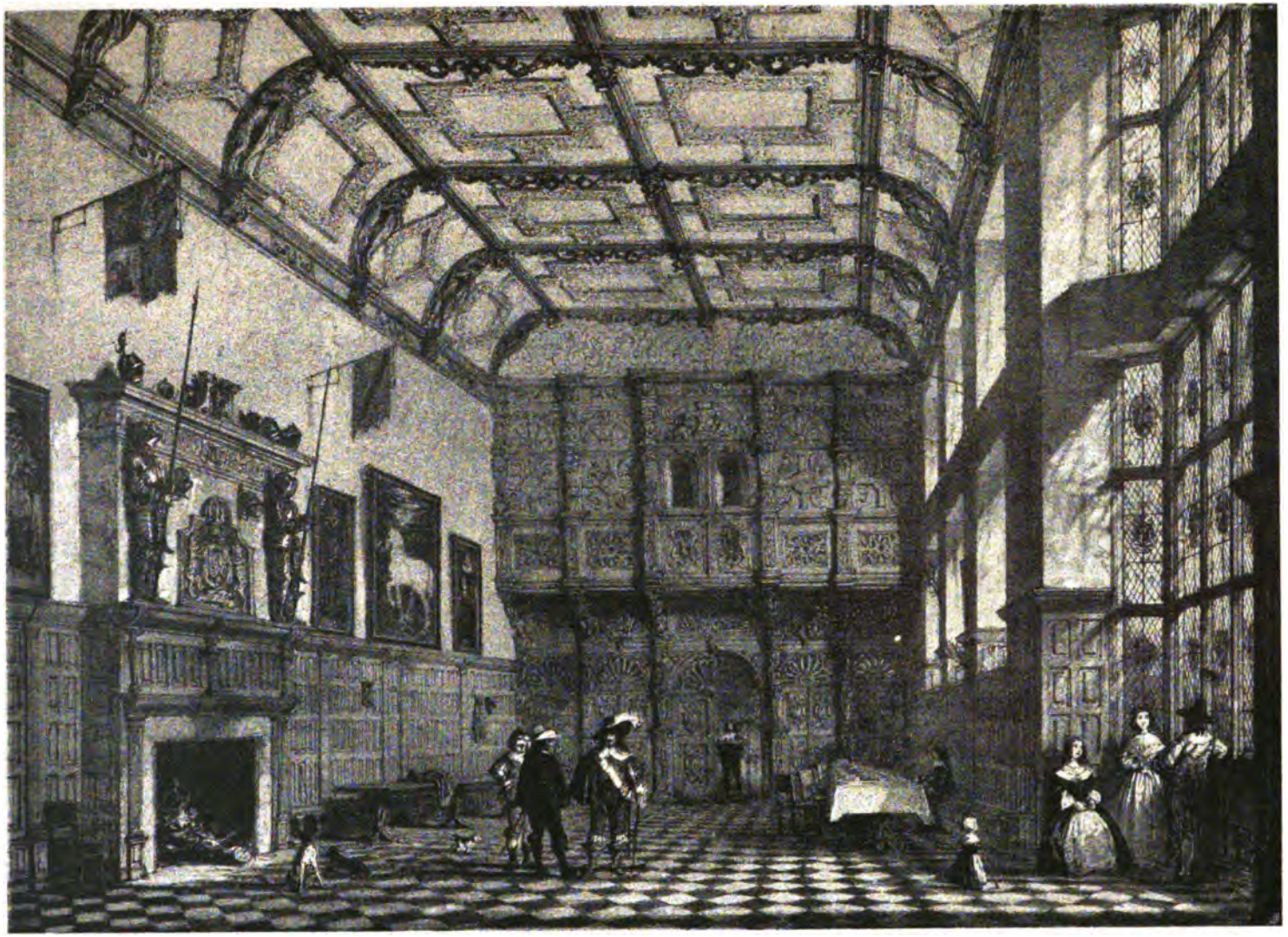
HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE: THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.



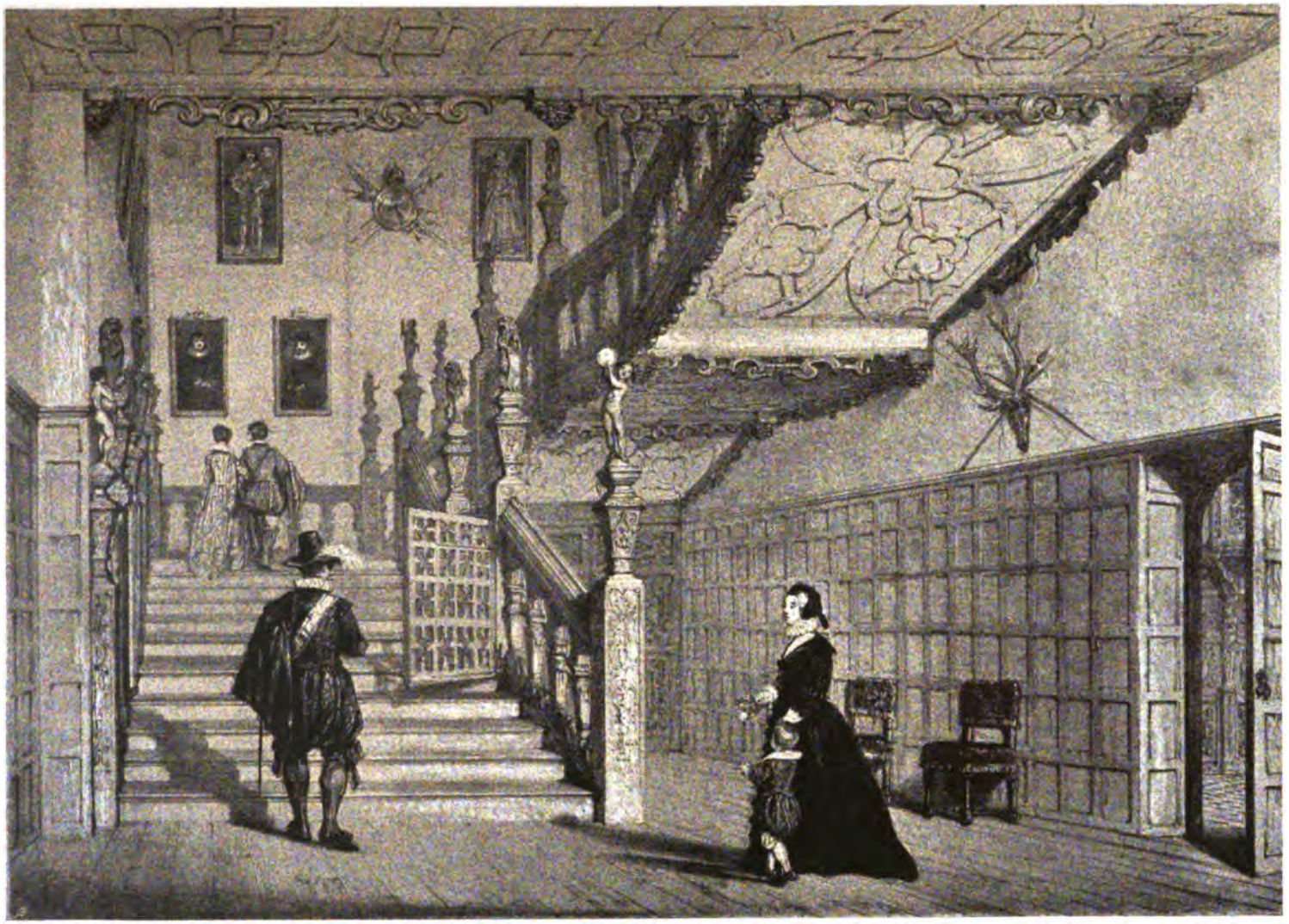
HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE: THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE: THE GALLERY.

HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE: GALLERY IN THE HALL.



HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE: THE HALL.



HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE: THE PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE.

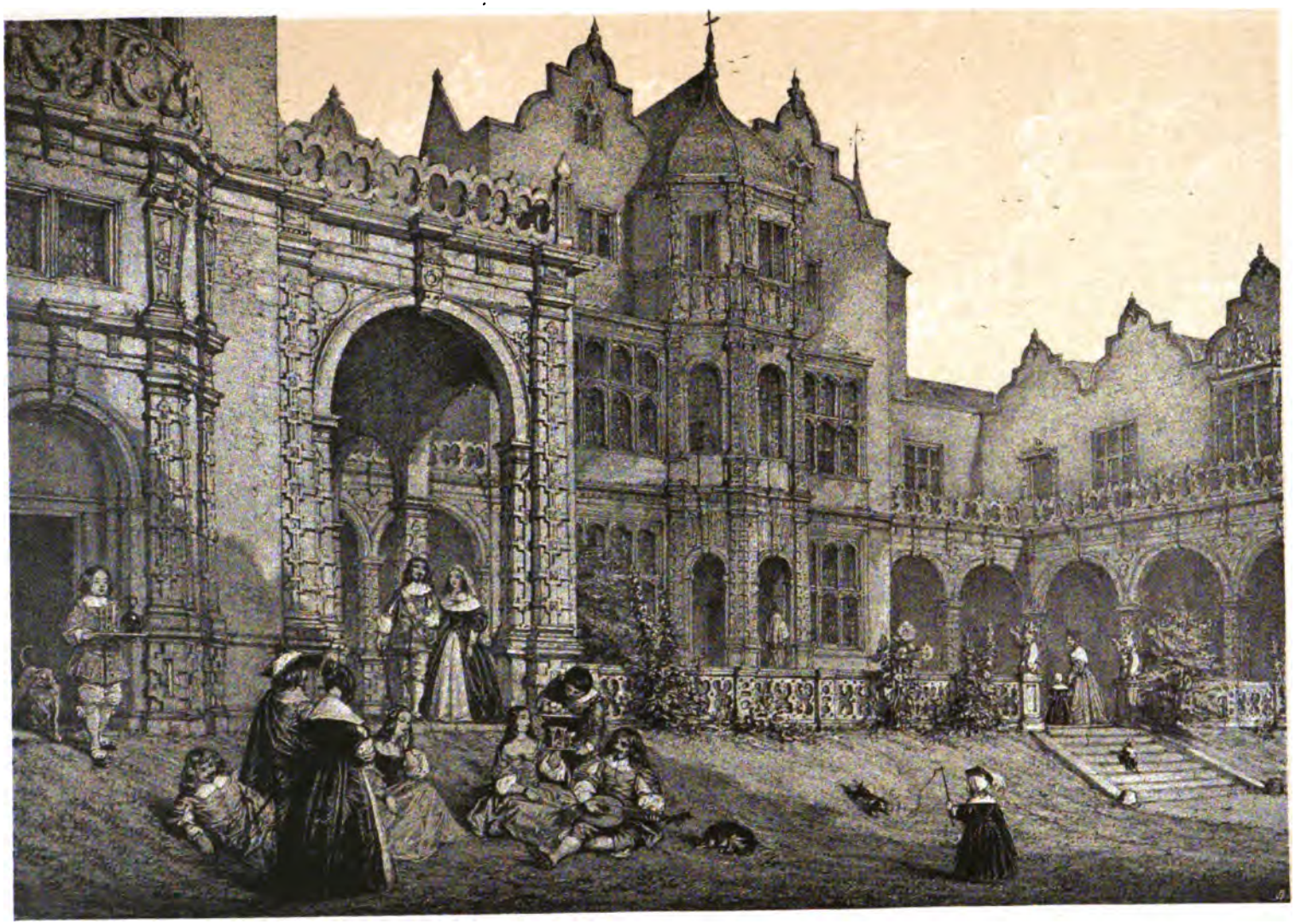
PL. L.

HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE: THE GALLERY.

HEVER CASTLE, KENT.

HEVER CASTLE, KENT: BAY WINDOW IN THE GALLERY.

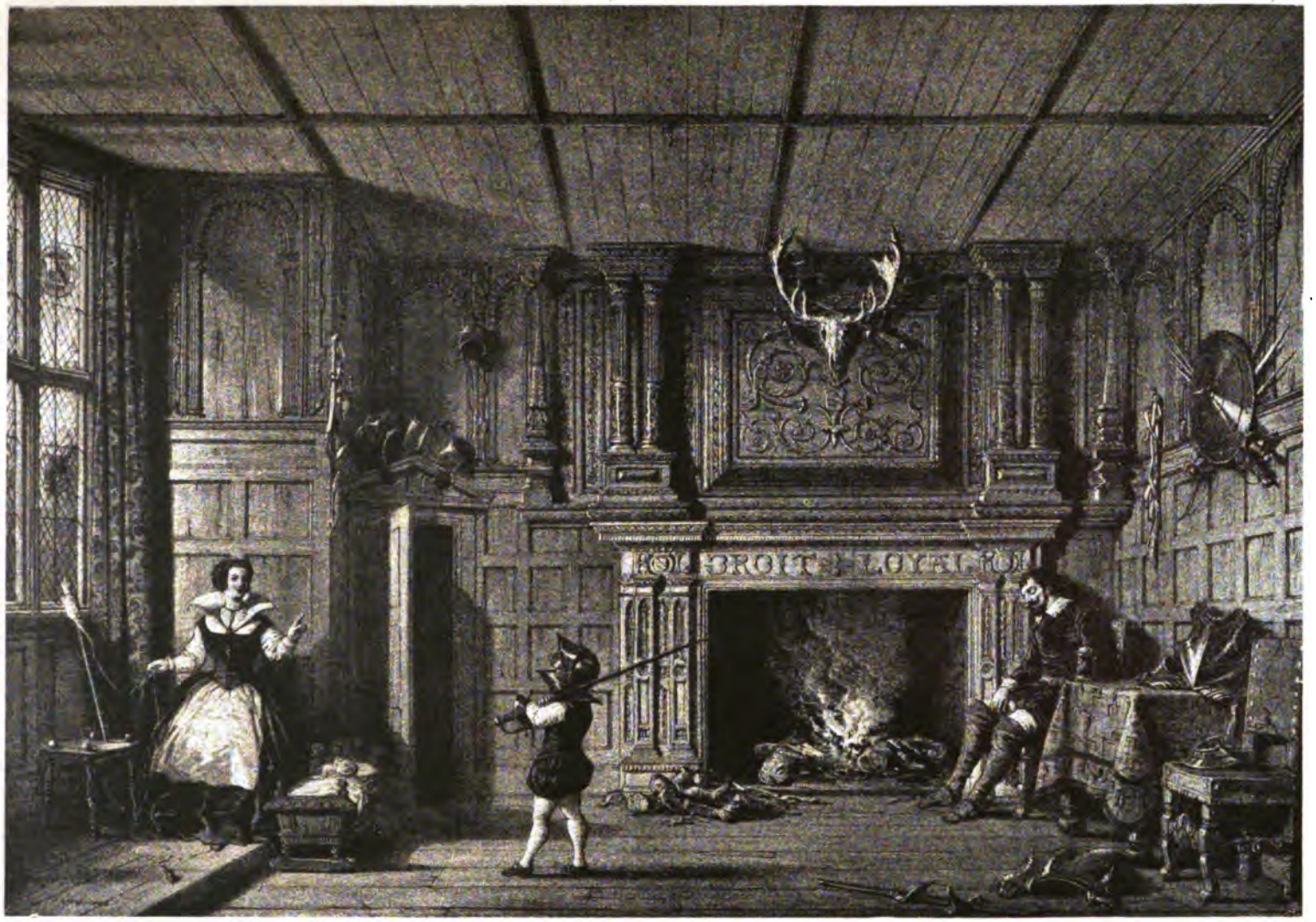
PL. LIII.



HOLLAND HOUSE, KENSINGTON.

PL. LIV.

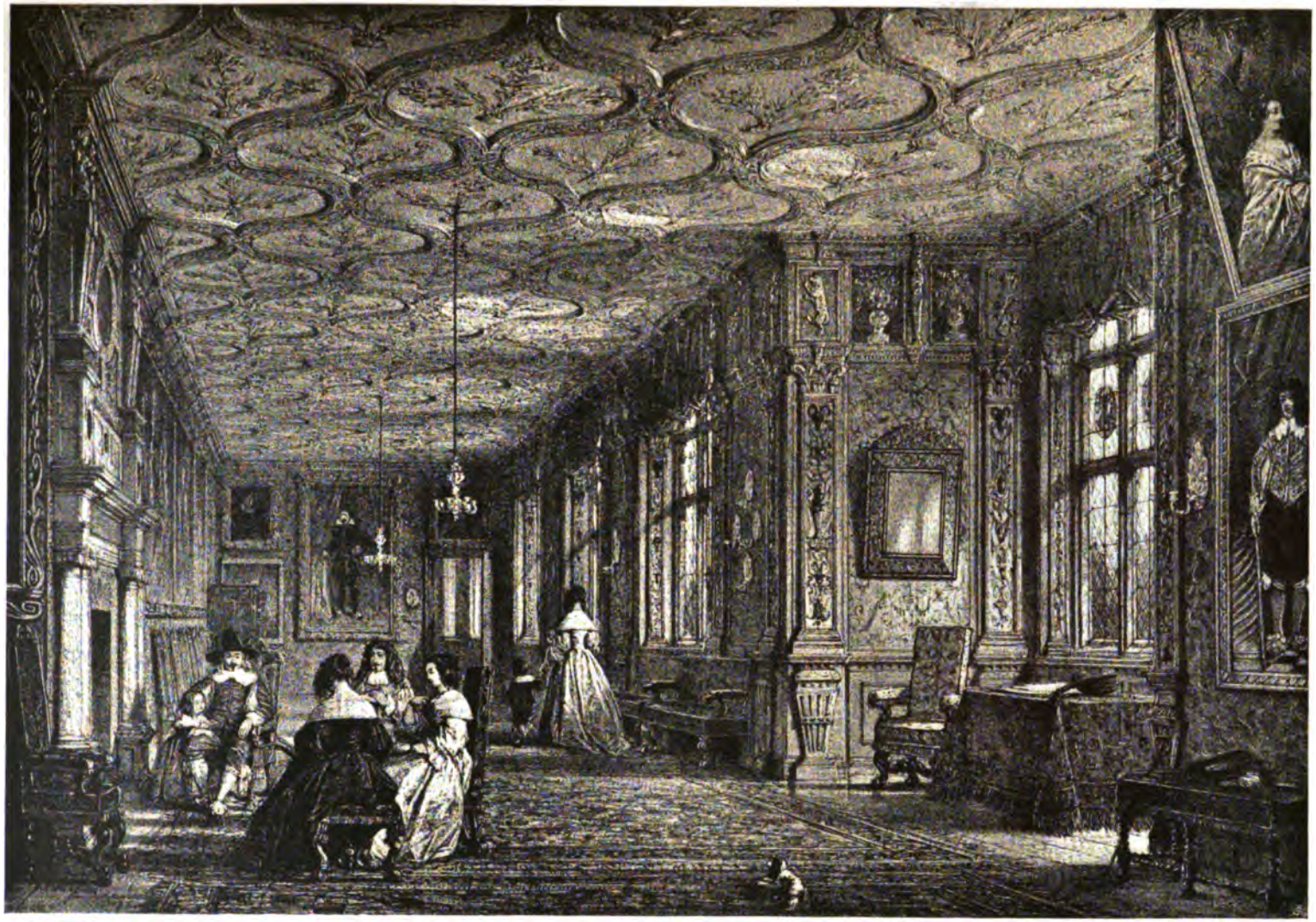
HOLLAND HOUSE, KENSINGTON: ENTRANCE TO GRAND STAIRCASE.



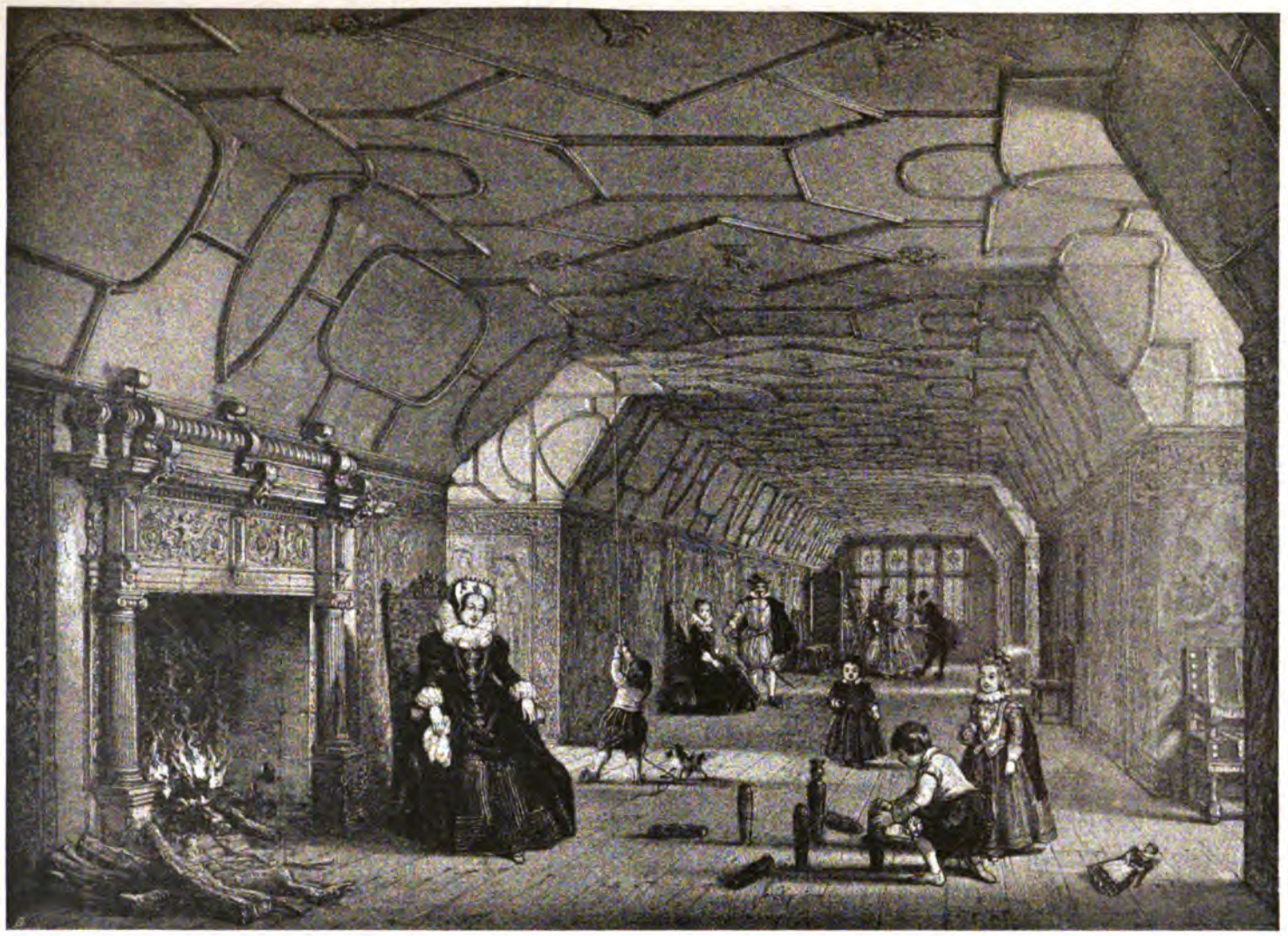
KENILWORTH, WARWICKSHIRE: FIREPLACE IN THE GATE-HOUSE.

KNOWLE, KENT: THE STAIRCASE.

KNOWLE, KENT: THE HALL.

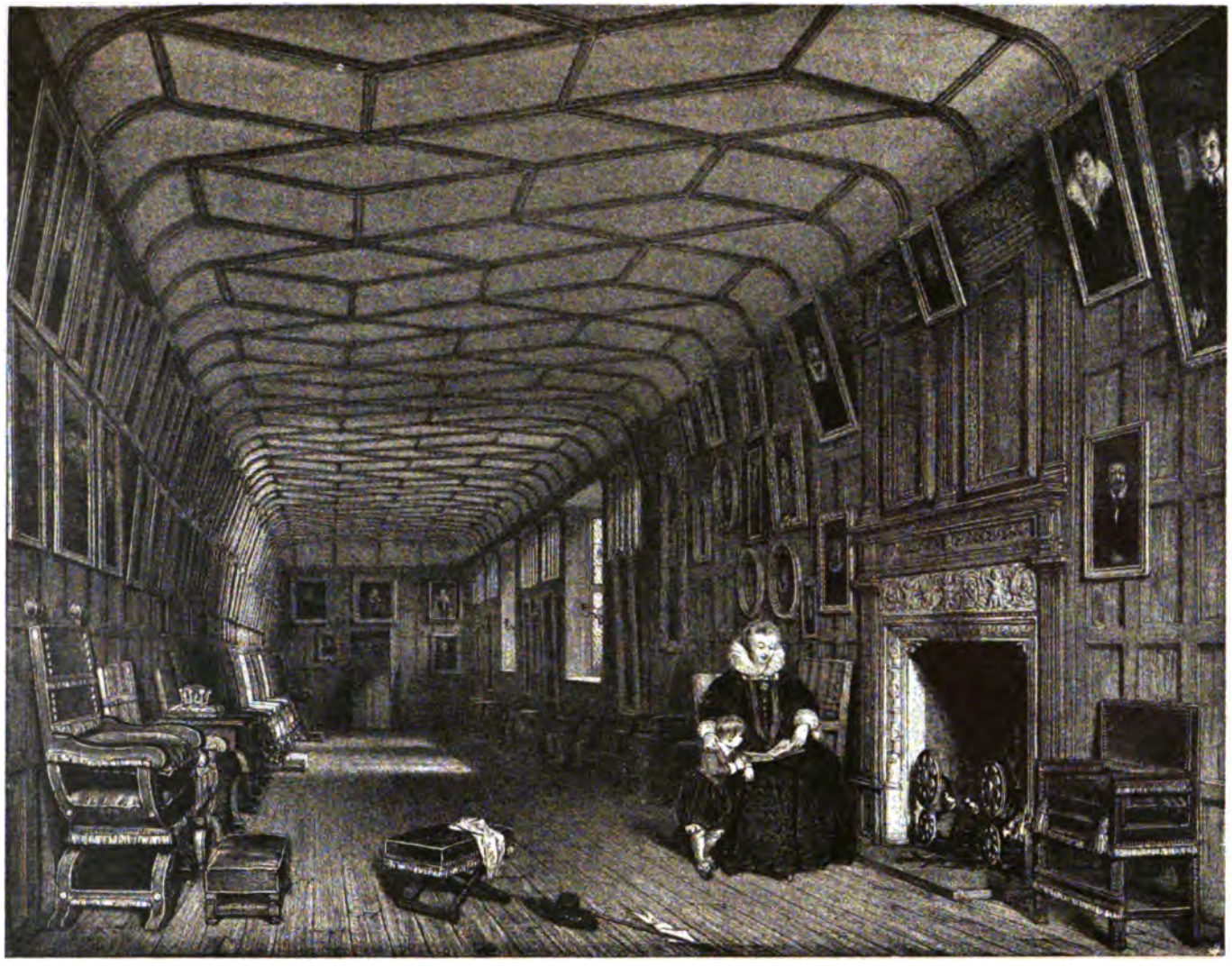


KNOWLE, KENT: THE CARTOON GALLERY.

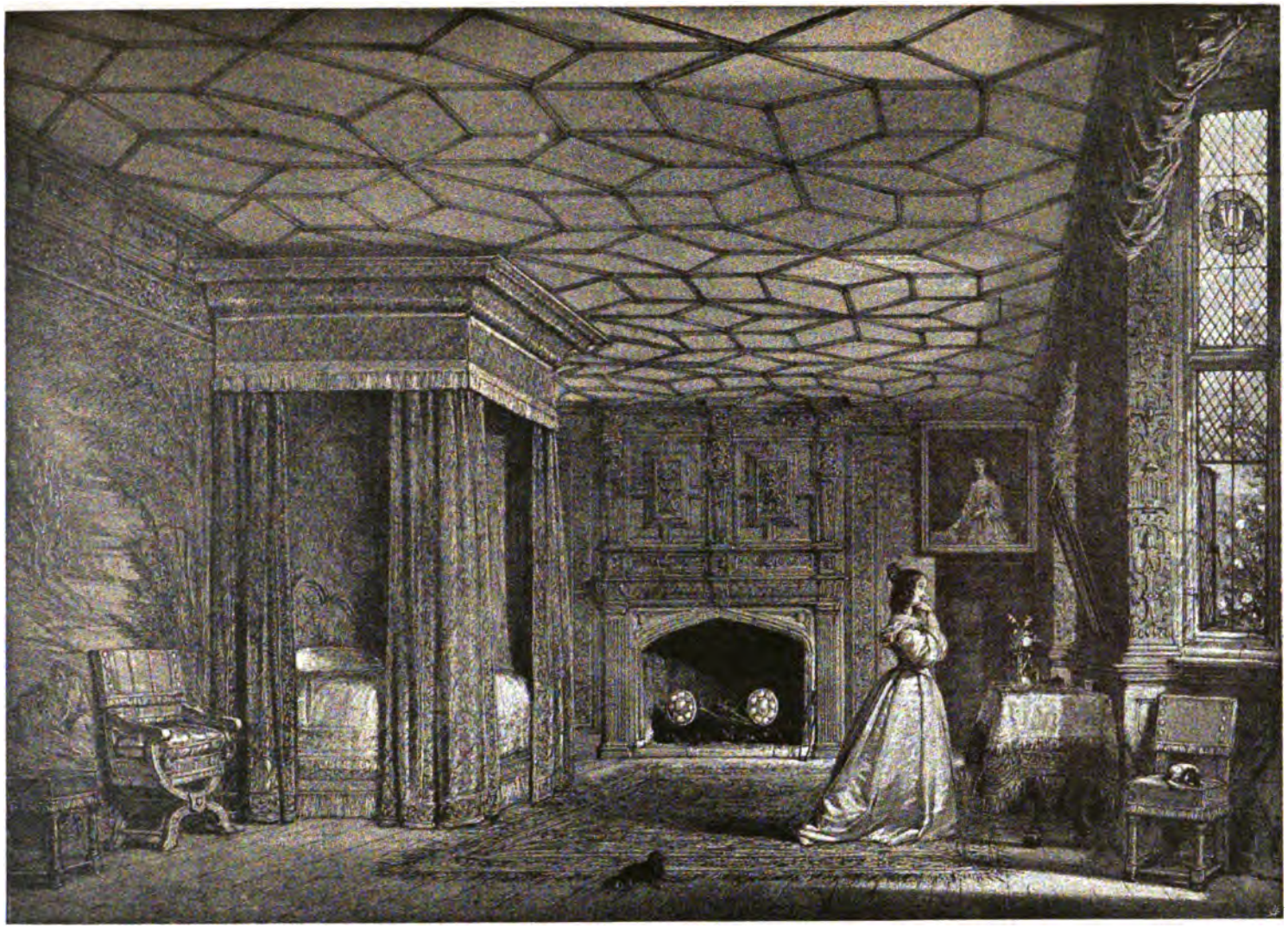


KNOWLE, KENT: GALLERY OVER THE HALL.

PL. LX.



KNOWLE, KENT: THE BROWN GALLERY.



KNOWLE, KENT: BED-CHAMBER.

PL. LXII.

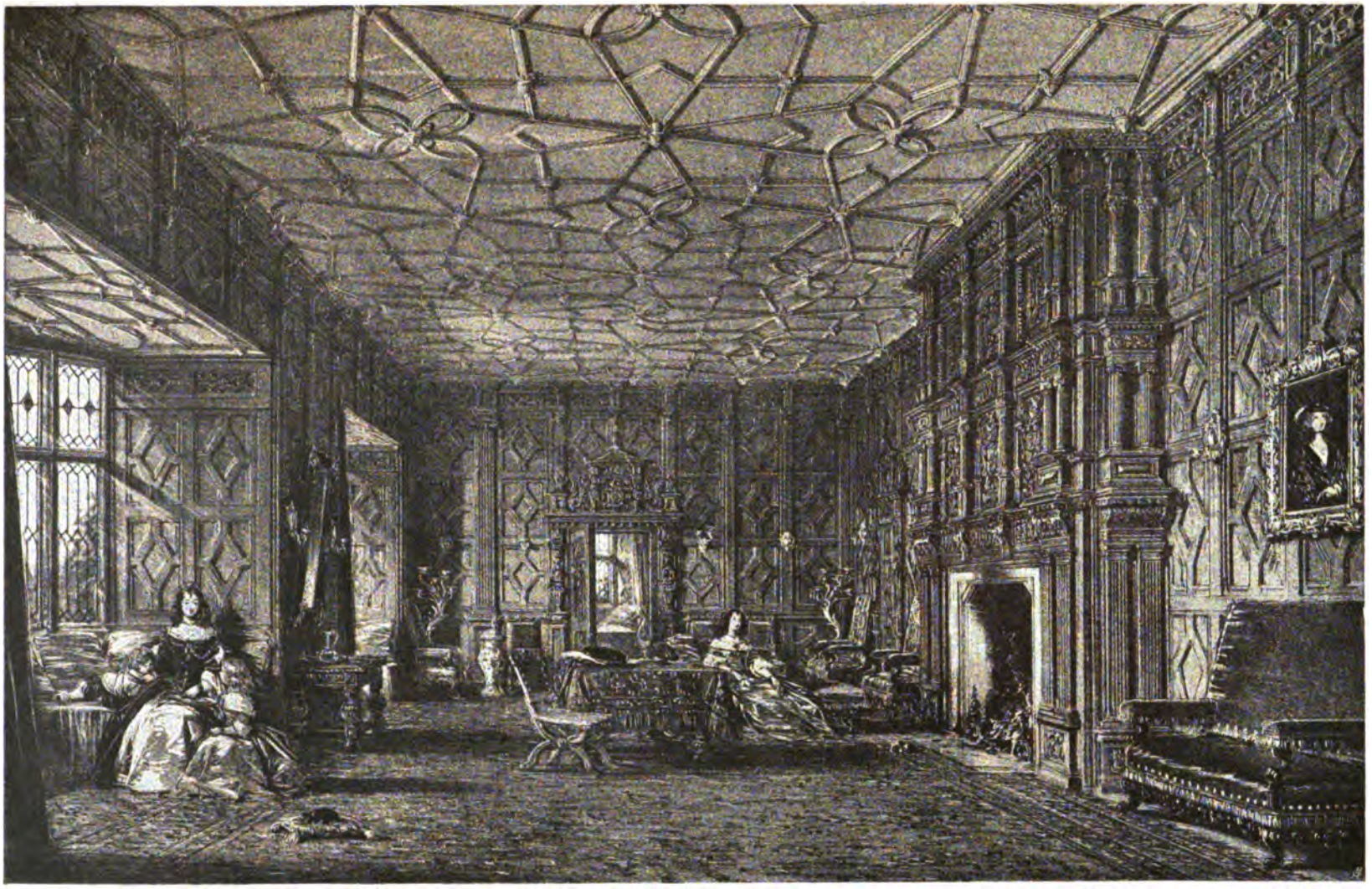
KNOWLE, KENT: ROOM LEADING TO THE CHAPEL.

LANHYDROC, CORNWALL: THE GALLERY.

PL. LXIV.

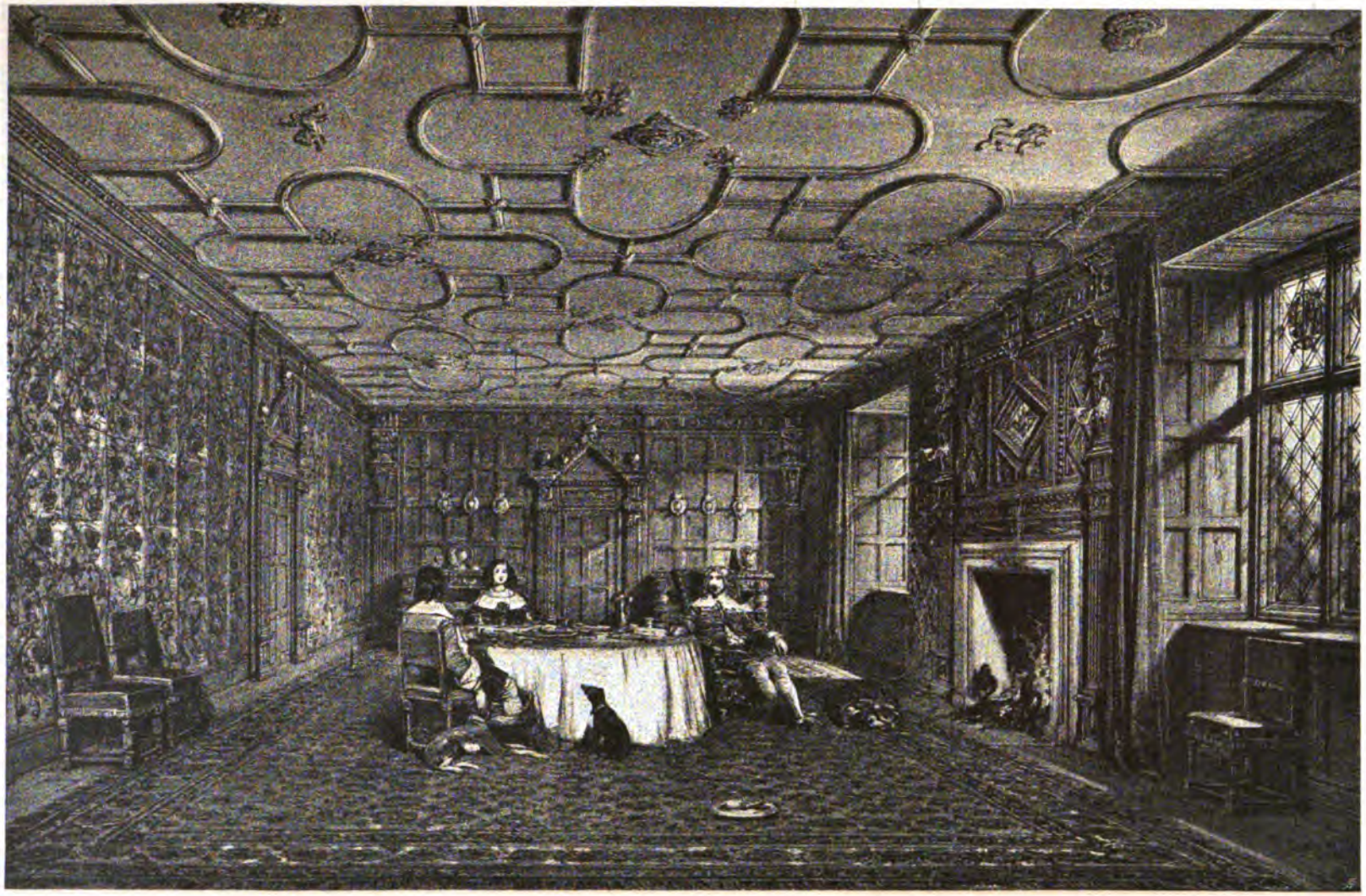
LEVENS, WESTMORELAND.

LEVENS, WESTMORELAND: THE HALL.



LEVENS, WESTMORELAND: THE LARGE DRAWING ROOM.

LEVENS, WESTMORELAND: THE SMALL DRAWING ROOM.



LEVENS, WESTMORELAND: THE DINING ROOM.

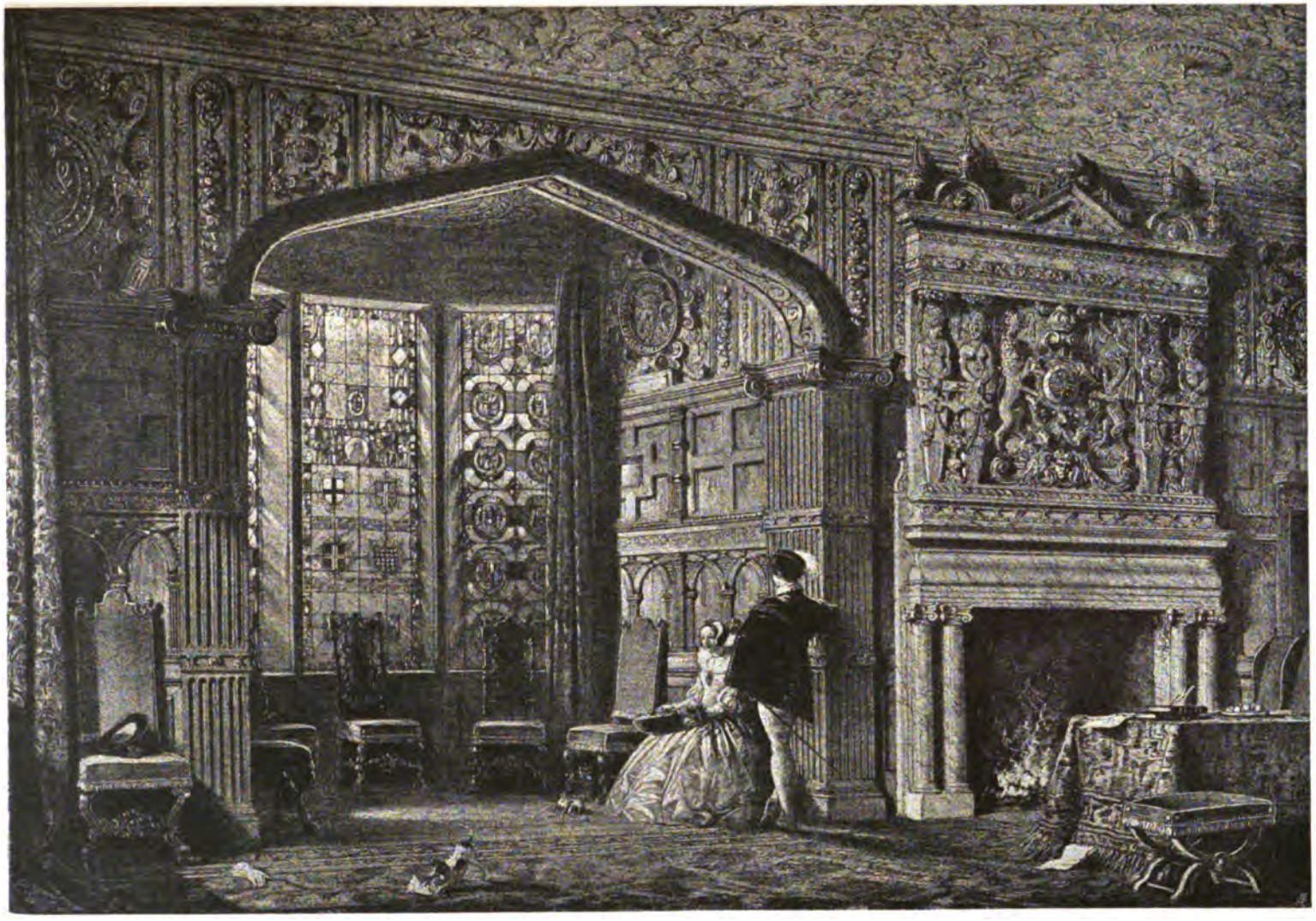
PL. LXIX.

LITTLE MORETON HALL, CHESHIRE.

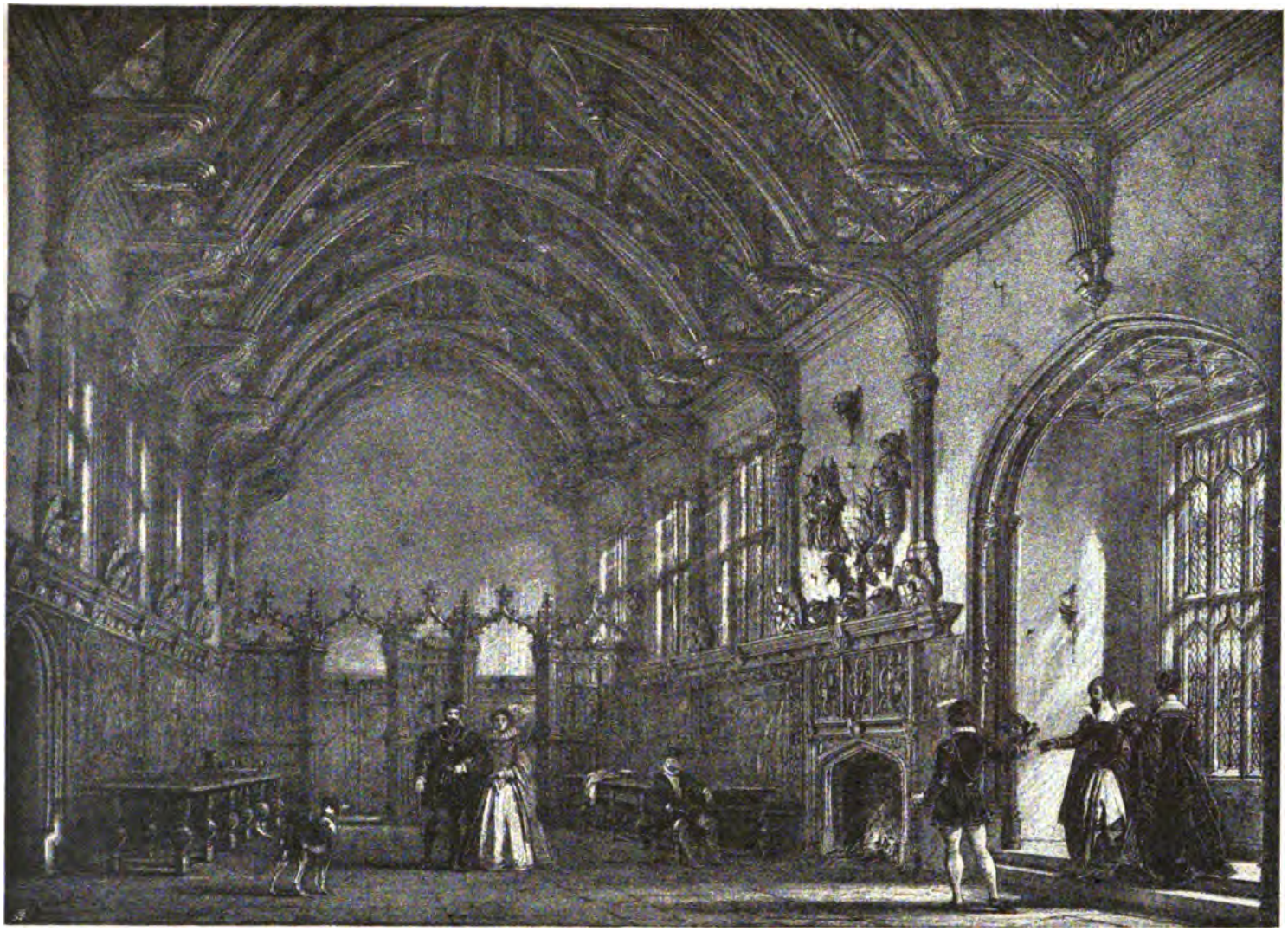
PL. LXX.

LITTLECOTES WILTSHIRE: THE HALL.

LOSELEY, NEAR GUILDFORD, SURREY: THE DRAWING ROOM.

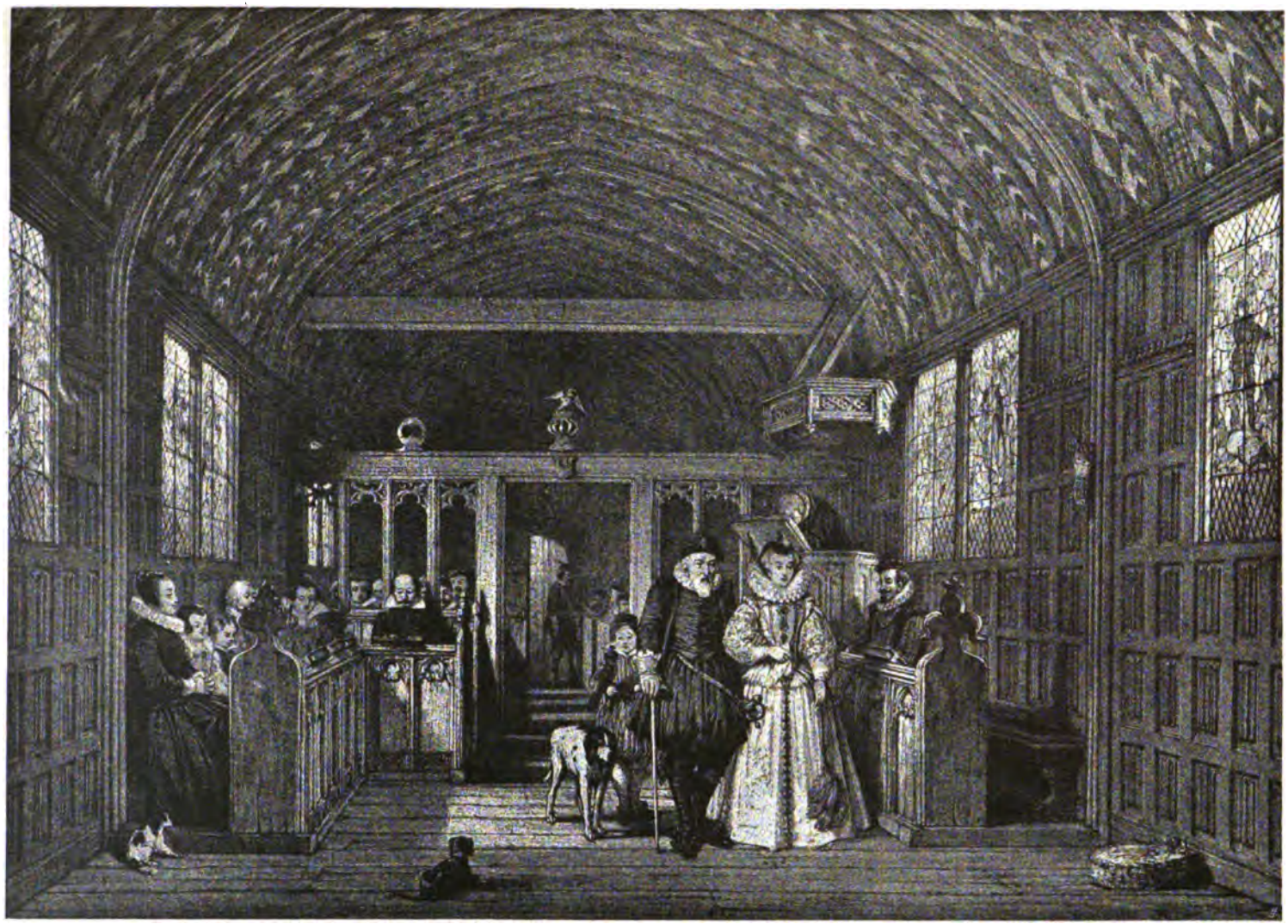


LYME HALL, CHESHIRE: BAY WINDOW IN DRAWING ROOM.

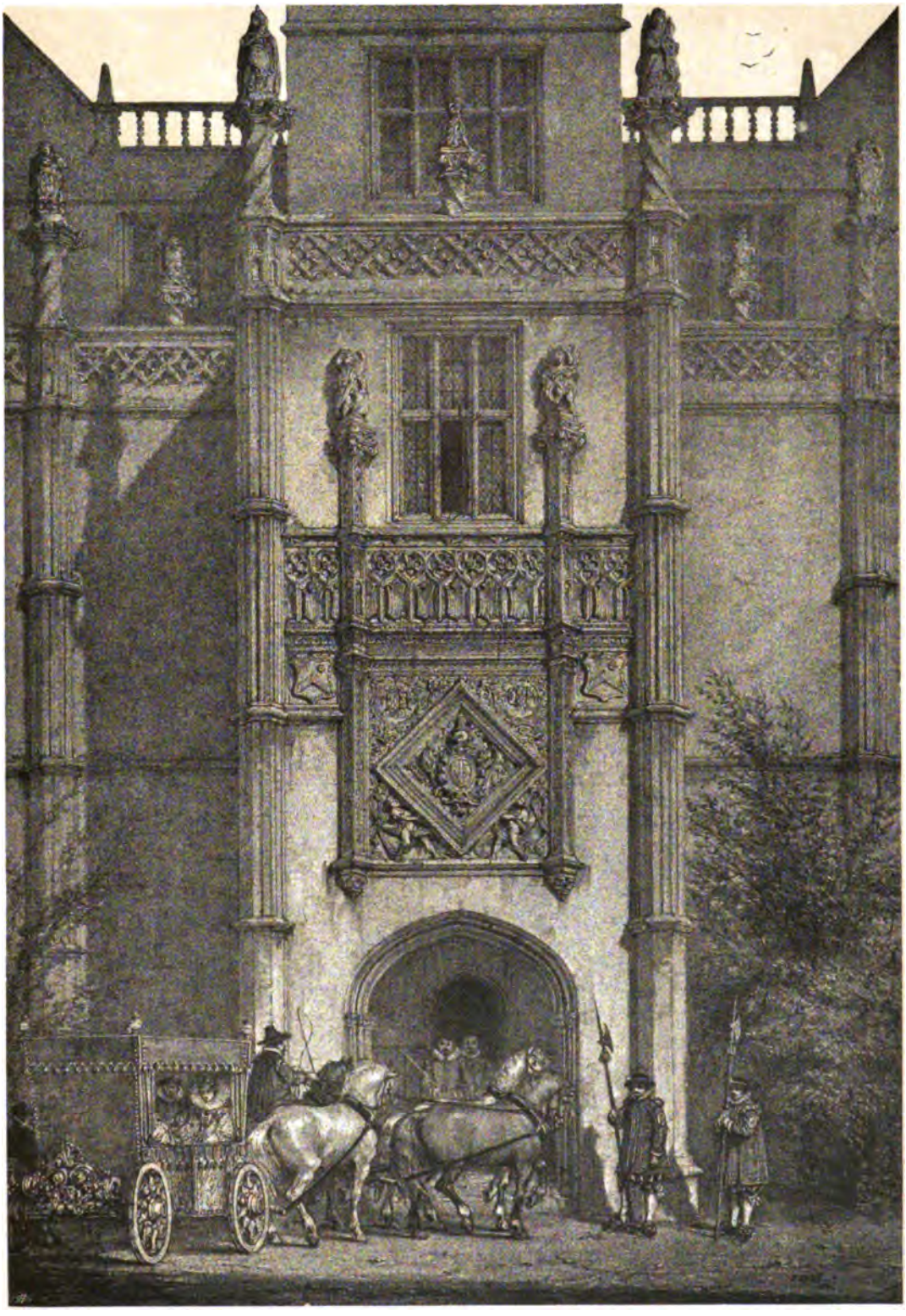


MILTON ABBEY DORSETSHIRE: THE HALL.

MOAT HOUSE, IGHTHAM, KENT: THE HALL.



MOAT HOUSE, IGHTHAM, KENT: THE CHAPEL.



MONTACUTE, SOMERSET : THE PORCH.

OCKWELLS, BERKSHIRE.

OCKWELLS, BERKSHIRE : THE HALL.

OCKWELLS, BERKSHIRE : THE PORCH AND CORRIDOR.

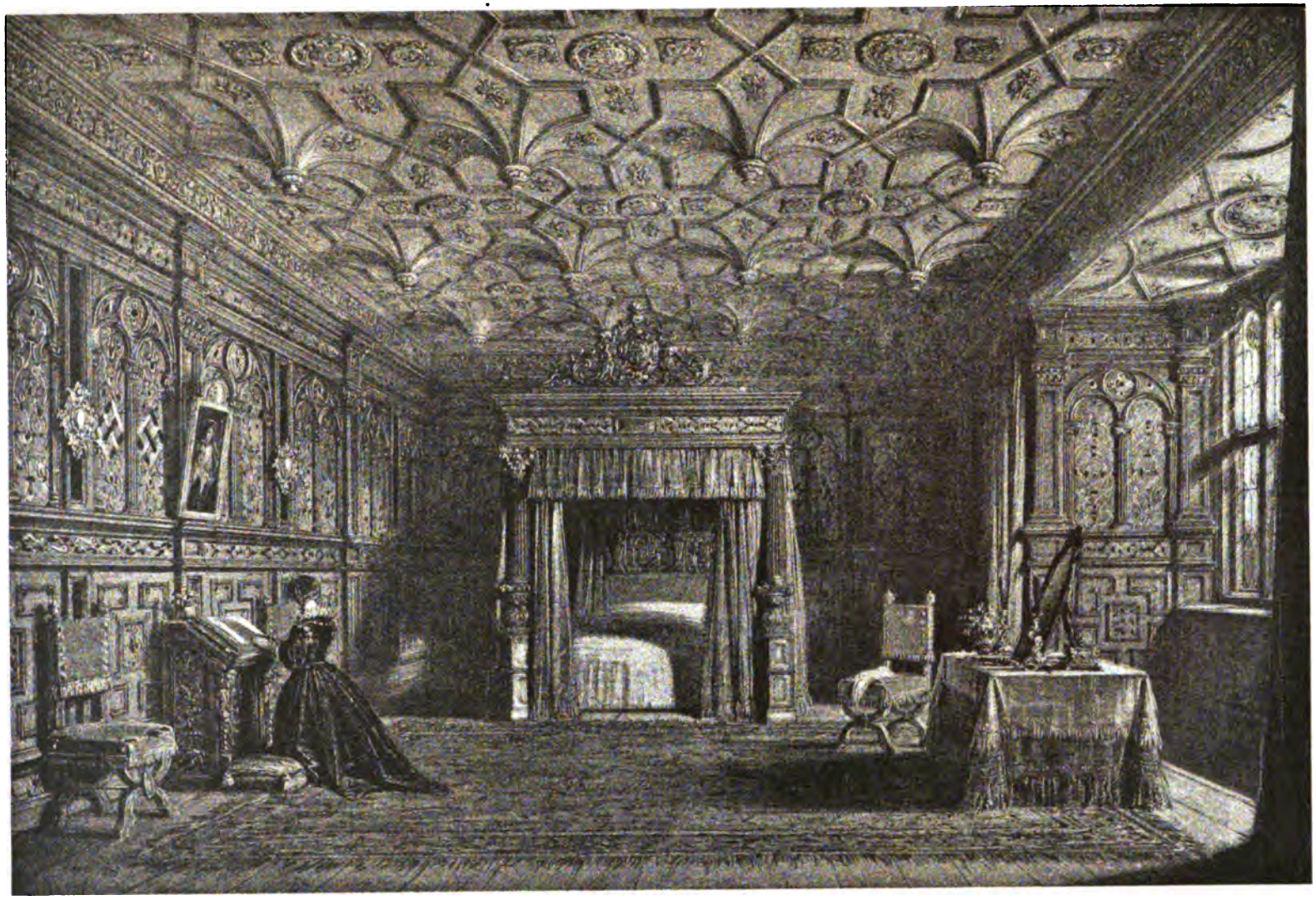
PARHAM, SUSSEX : THE HALL.

PL. LXXXI.

PENSHURST, KENT.

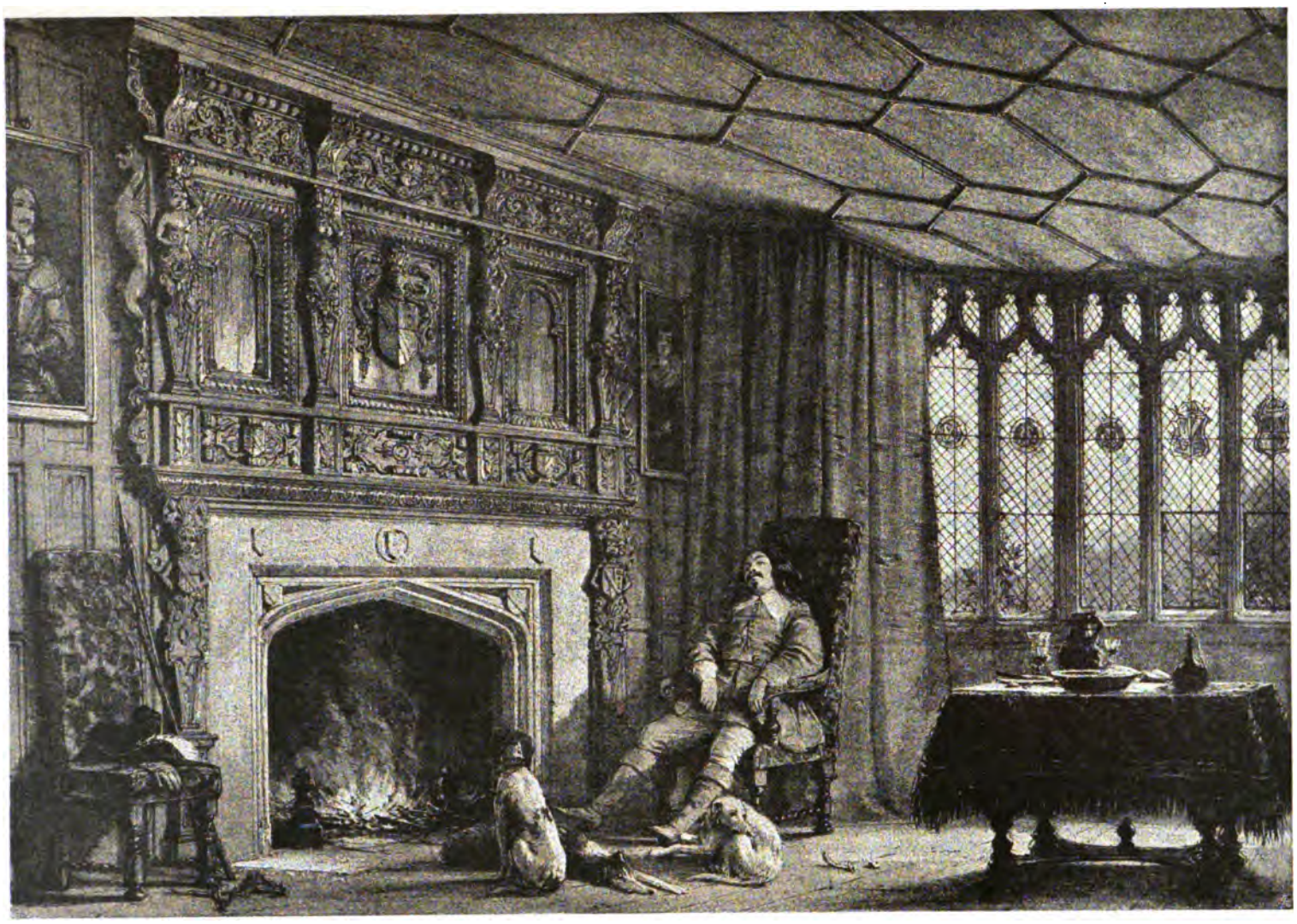
PENSHURST, KENT: THE HALL.

POSTLIP HALL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE: CHAMBER.



SIZERGH, WESTMORELAND : INLAID CHAMBER.

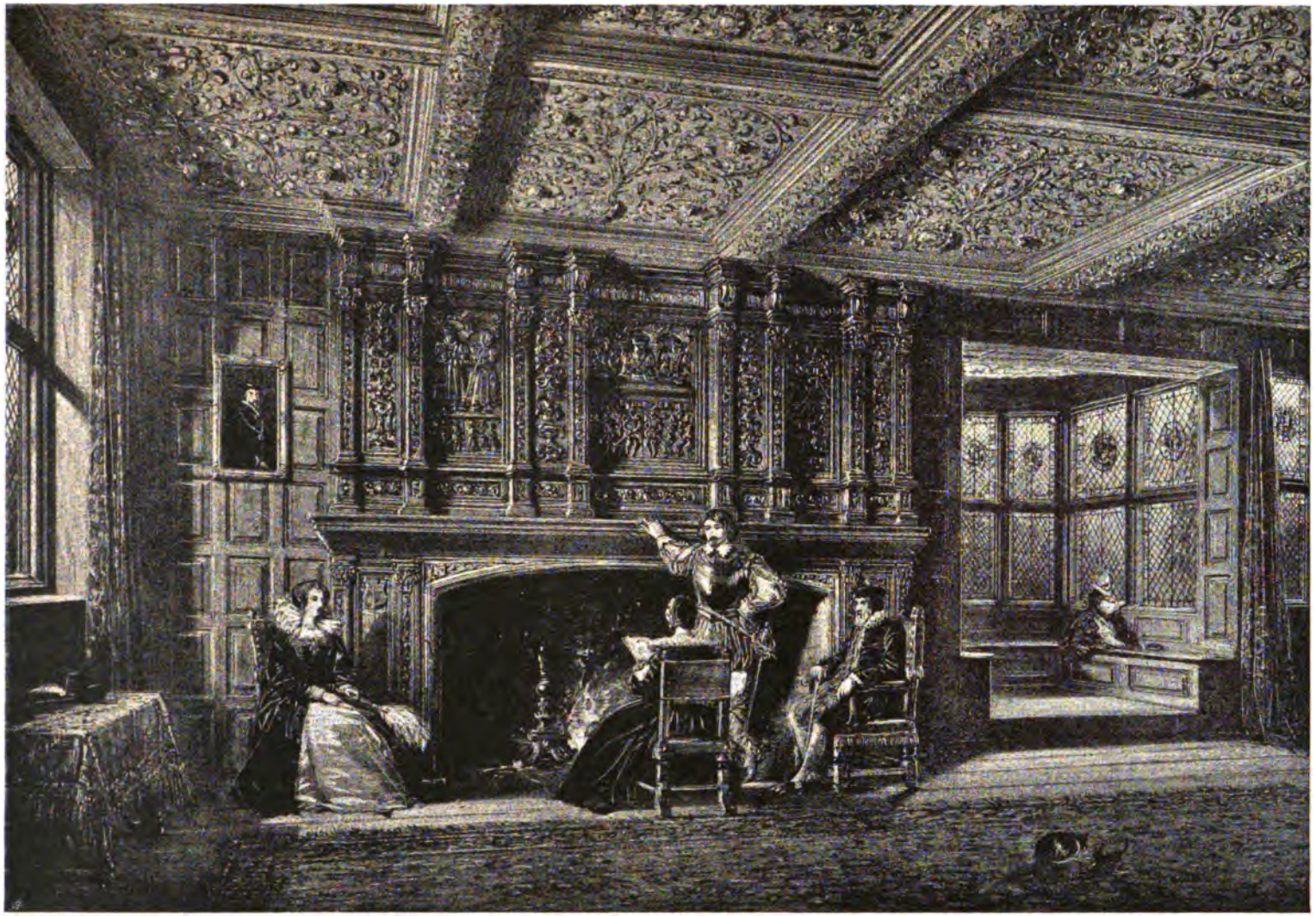
PL. LXXXV.



SOUTHAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE.

SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE: GARDEN FRONT.

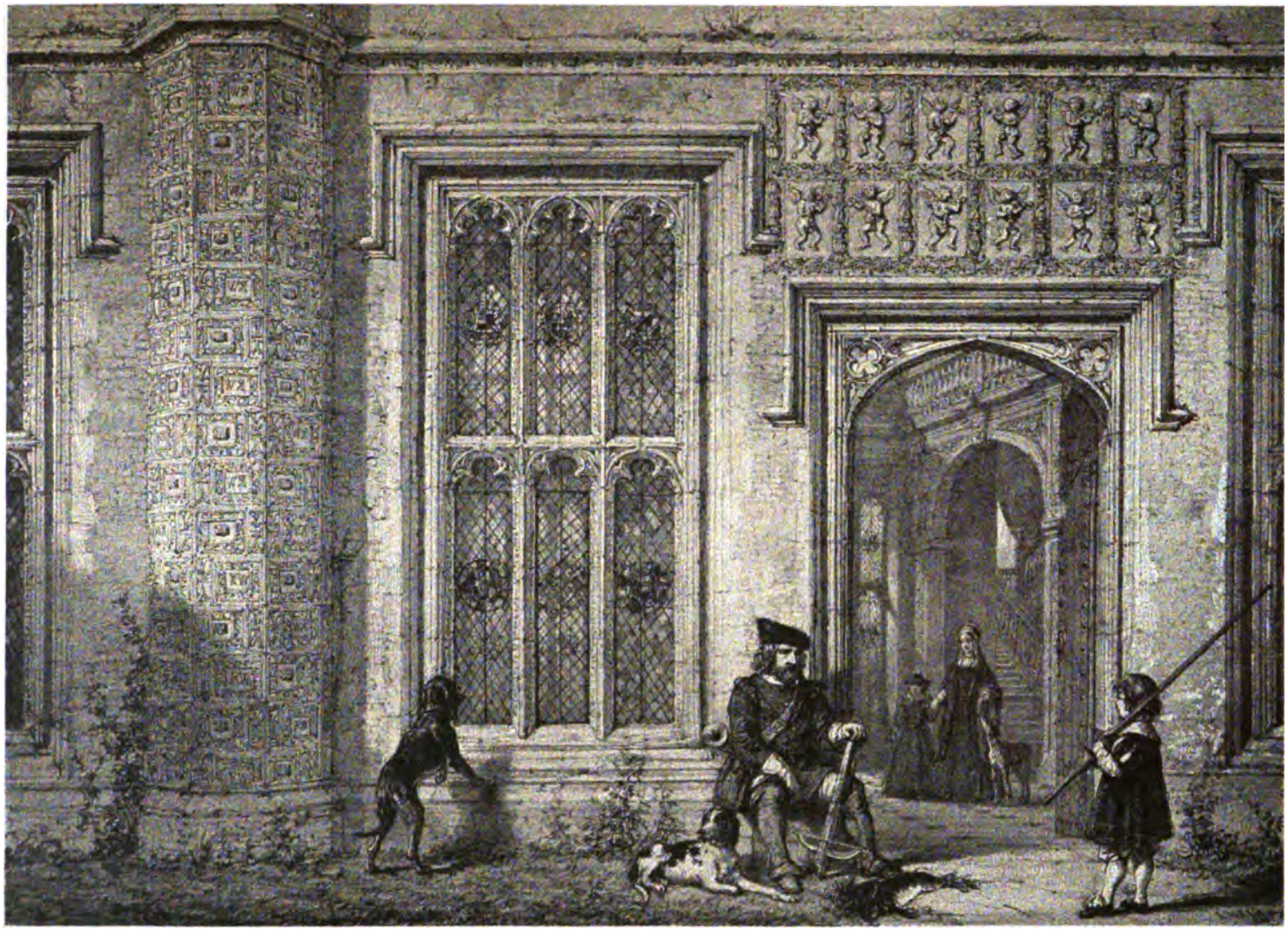


SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE: FIREPLACE IN DRAWING ROOM.

SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE: THE HALL.

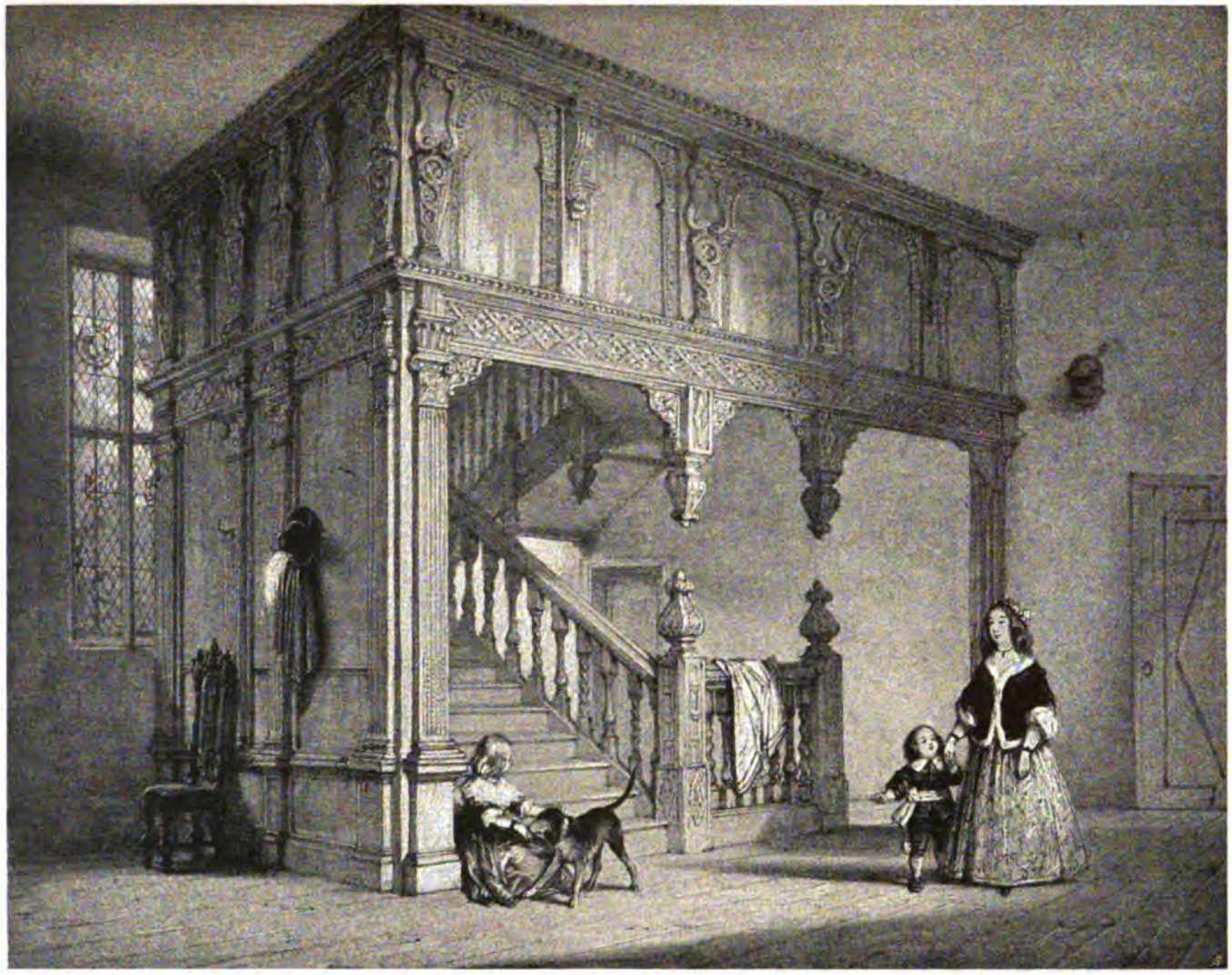
SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE: BAY WINDOW IN THE HALL.

SUTTON PLACE, SURREY.



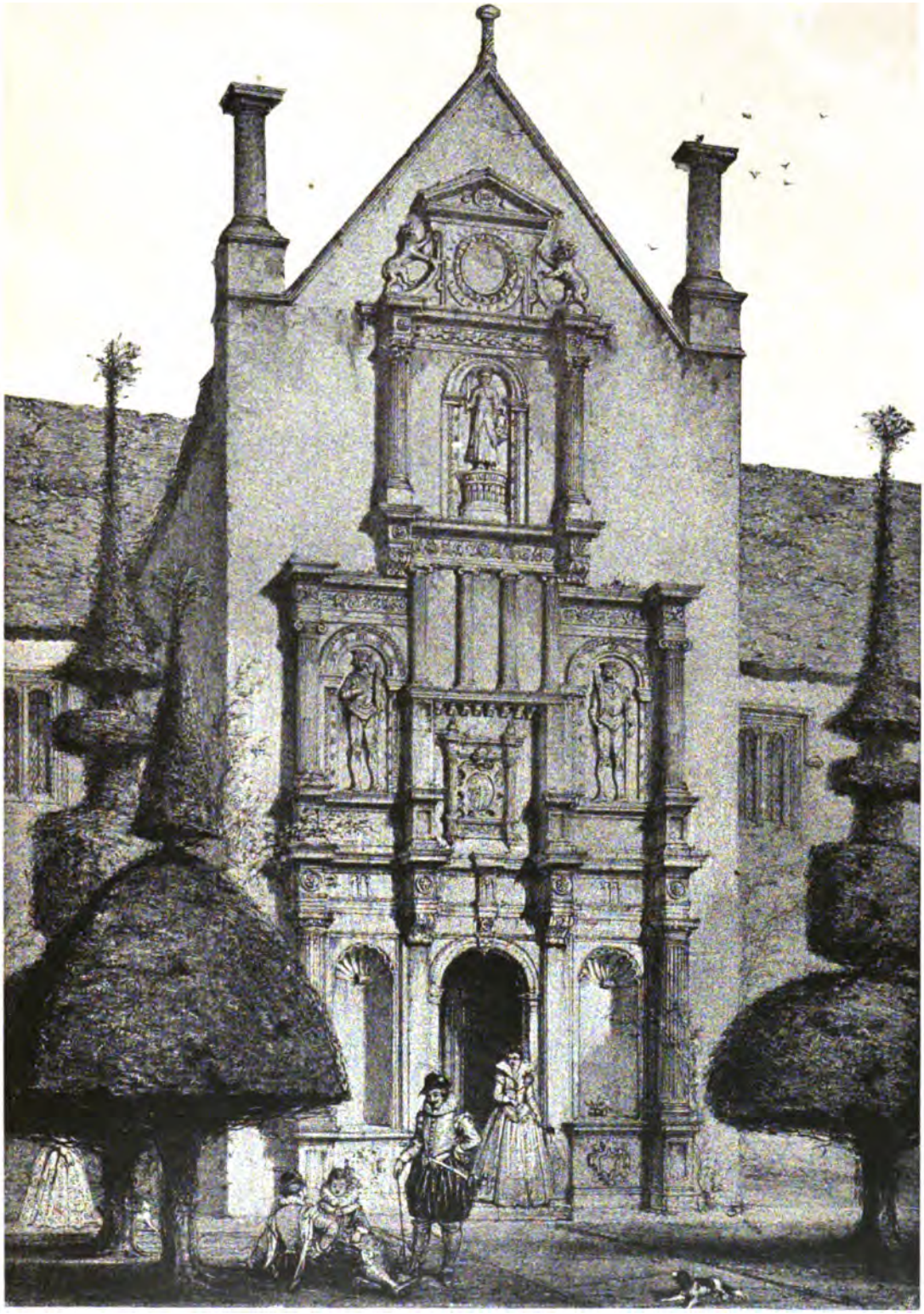
SUTTON PLACE, SURREY: ENTRANCE TO THE HALL.

WAKEHURST, SUSSEX : THE HALL.



WAKEHURST, SUSSEX : THE STAIRCASE.

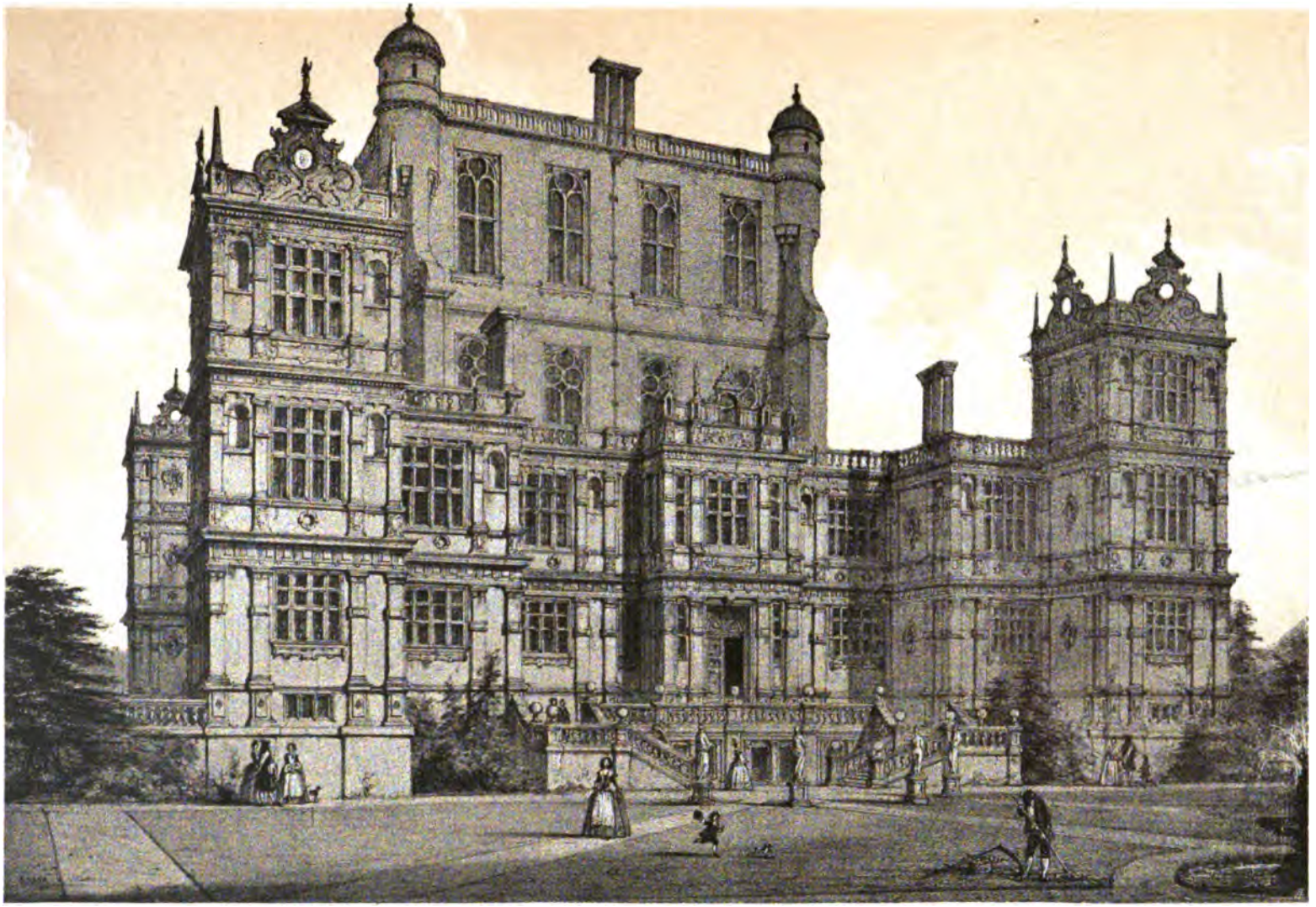
PL. XCV.



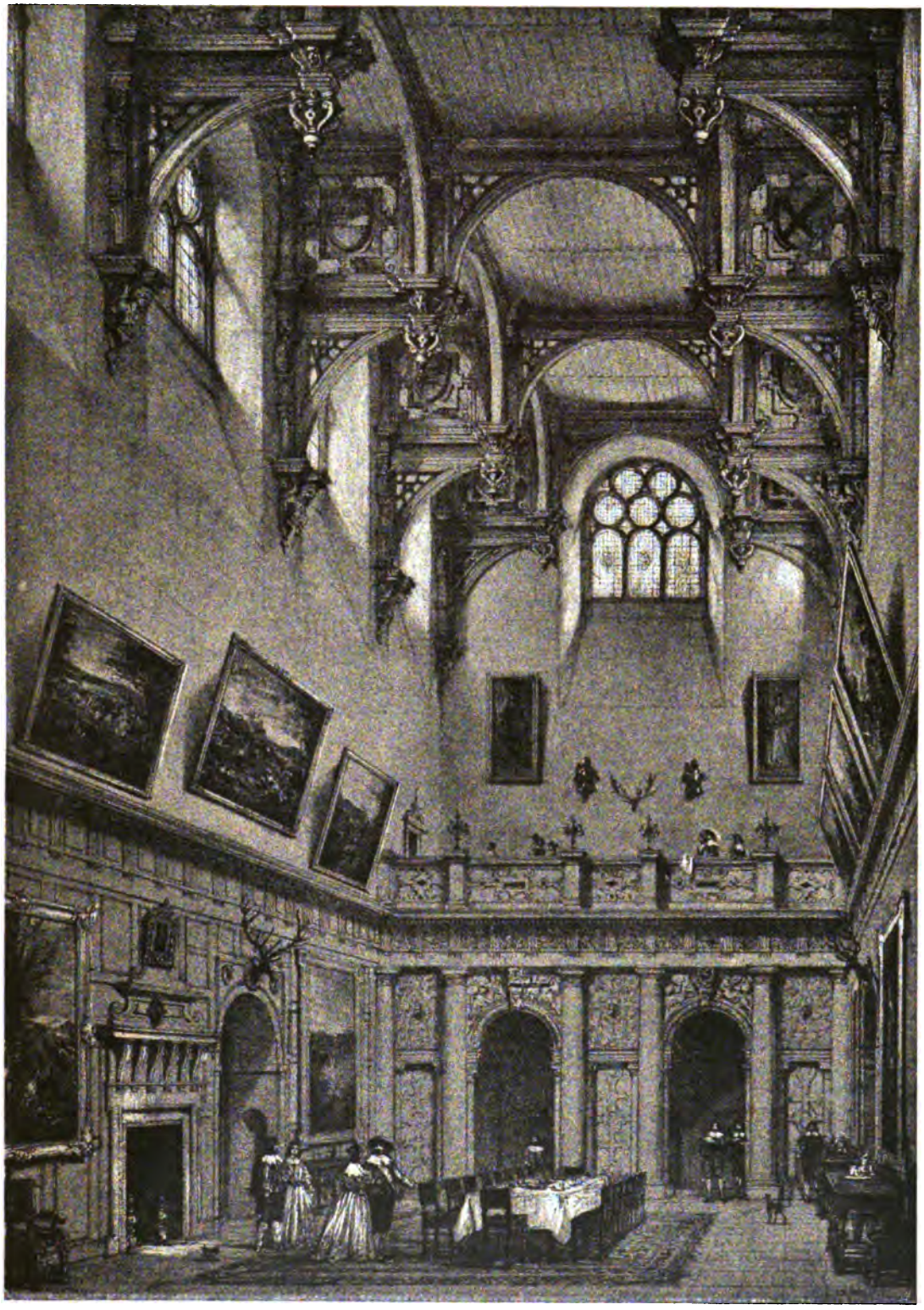
WATERSTONE, DORSETSHIRE.

PL. XCVI.

WESTWOOD, WORCESTERSHIRE.

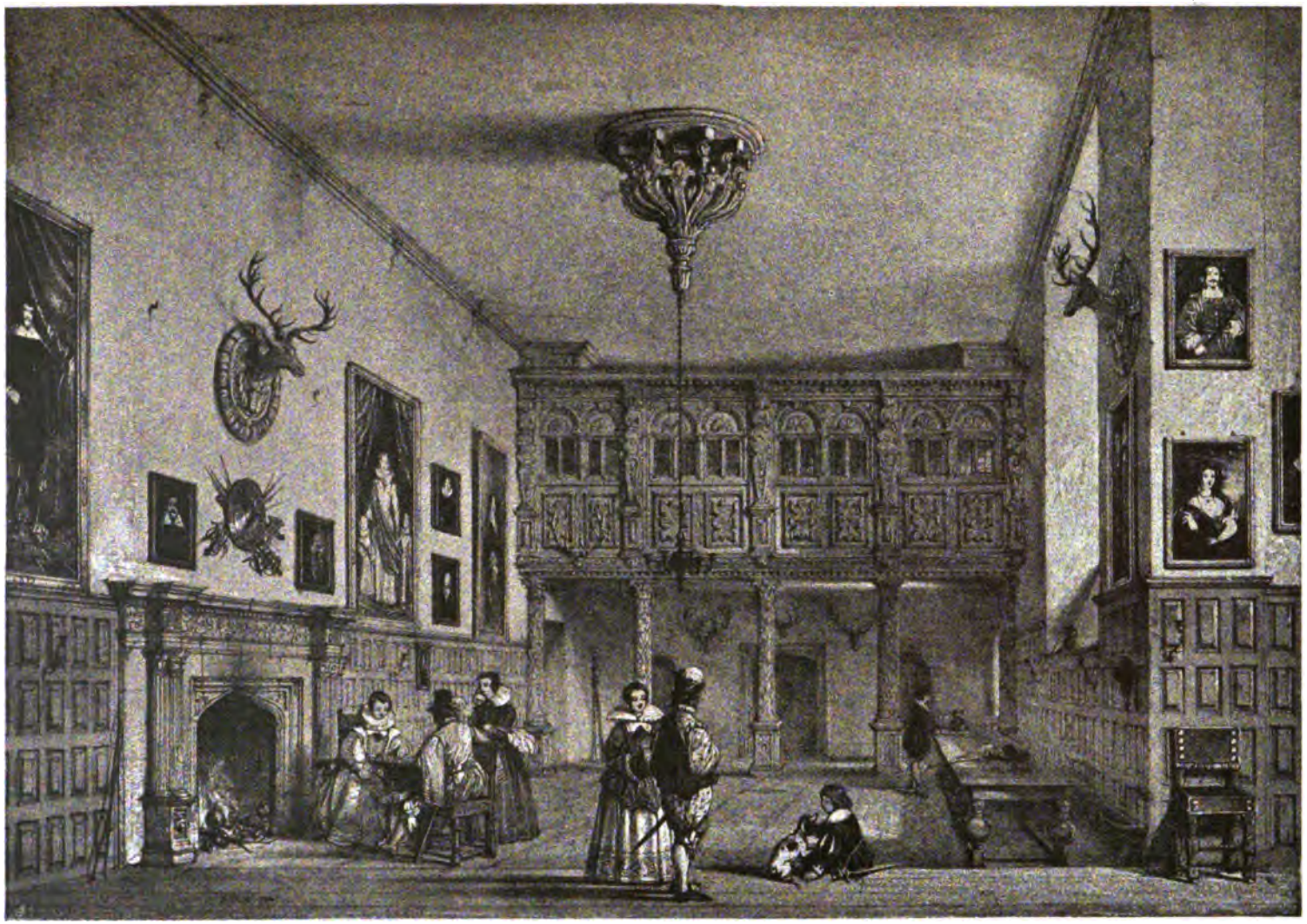


WOLLATON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

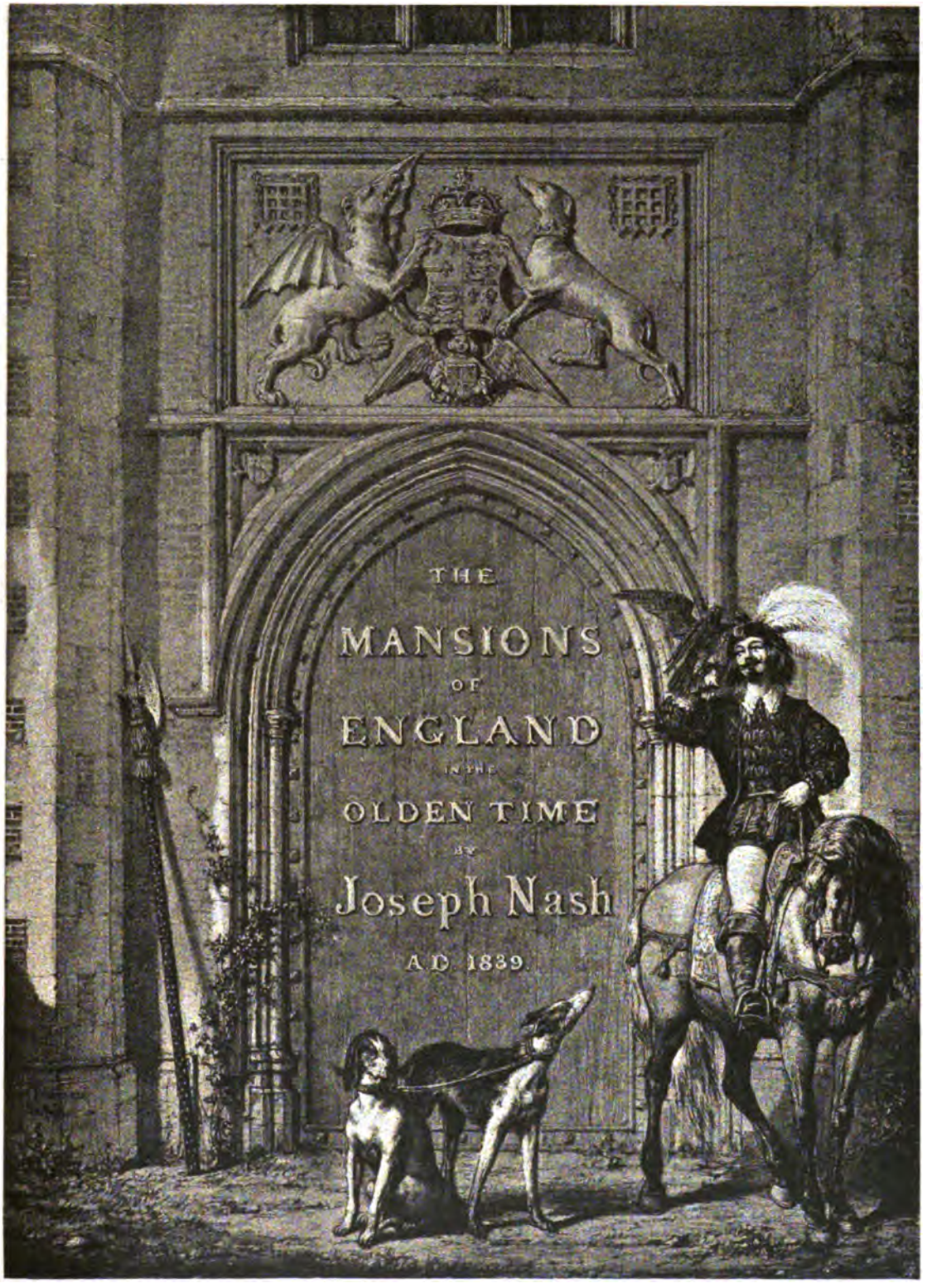


WOLLATON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: THE HALL.

WROXTON ABBEY OXFORDSHIRE : THE PORCH.



WROXTON ABBEY, OXFORDSHIRE; THE HALL.



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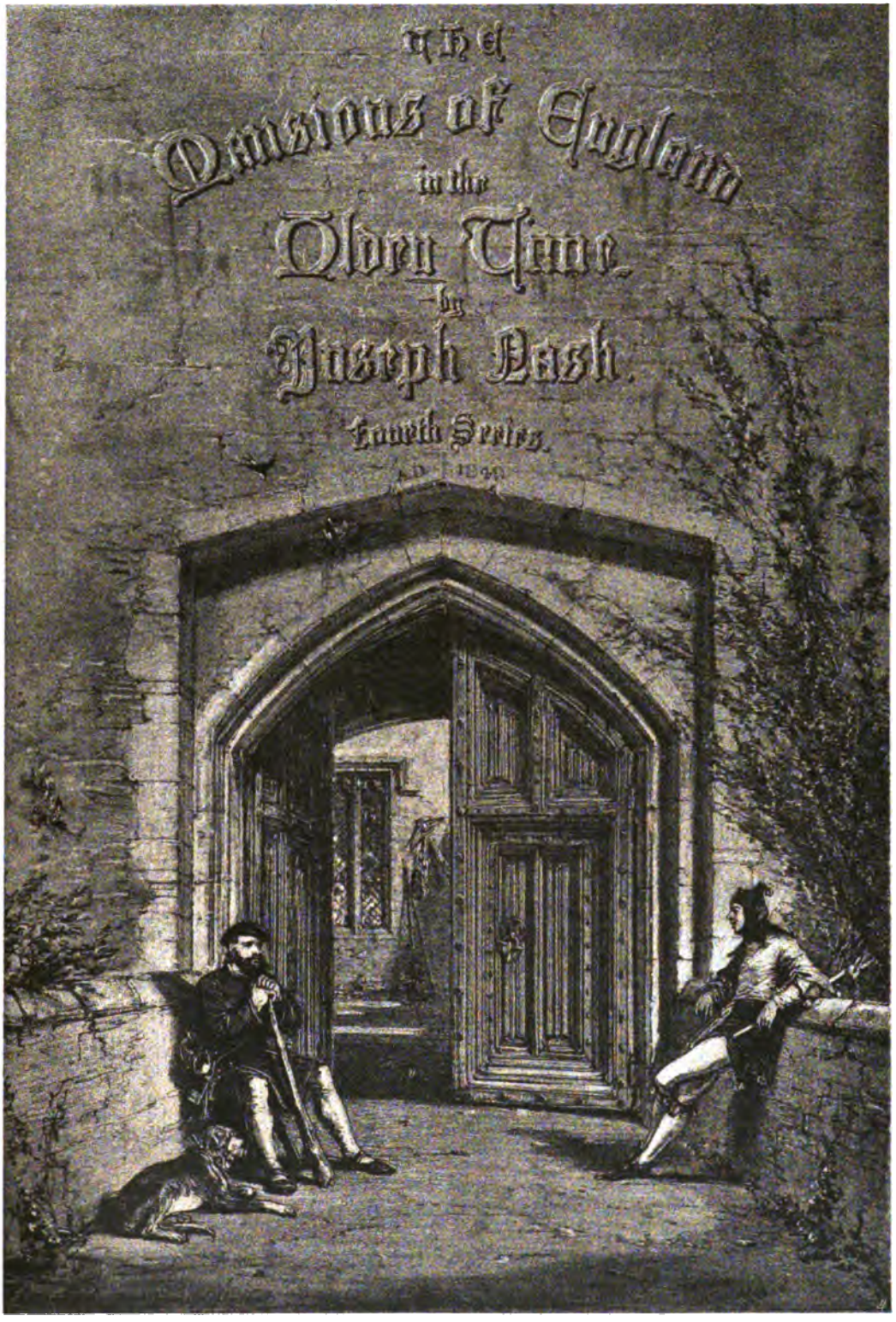

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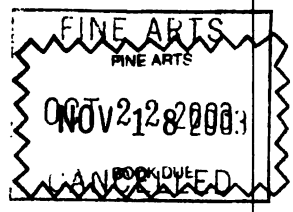

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